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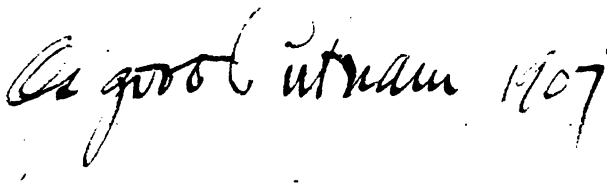

MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS

ON

RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL,

AND

AGRICULTURAL SUBJECTS:

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.
LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

VOL. I:

CHARGES AND SERMONS.

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IN GRATEFUL TESTIMONY OF

THE LONG AND UNINTERRUPTED FRIENDSHIP

WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR

HAS HAD THE HAPPINESS TO LIVE WITH

DR. STRACHEY,

ARCHDEACON OF SUFFOLK,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

TO HIM,

BY

RICHARD LANDAFF.

412460

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN 1788 I collected into an octavo volume ten of my Publications, under the title of "Sermons on public Occasions, and Tracts on Religious Subjects."

The events of a long and an happy life, for which I am most thankful to it's Author, have impelled me from time to time, but always, I trust, in subservience to what I esteemed the public good, to give to the world divers short Publications, some of which have gone through several editions. On this occasion I have thought fit to collect these also, and to publish them in two volumes. None of them, I hope, will be unacceptable to the Reader; especially when he is informed that I do not mean either to publish any thing more, or to leave behind me any manuscript prepared for the press, except a quarto

a quarto volume, consisting of—The Life of RICHARD WATSON, Lord Bishop of Landaff, written by himself at different intervals, and revised in 1814.

> Ingruit senectus, appropinquat mors et melinis ævi dies cùm hoc clariùs elucibunt. Juvat intereà tenui aliquod monumentum reliquisse vitæ non otiosè peractæ et brevi quasi functum militia, deinceps à laboribus requiescere.

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A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN JUNE 1805.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A NUMEROUS and respectable part of the Clergy of my Diocese requested me, at the time it was delivered, to publish the Charge which is now submitted to the world. I excused myself from complying with their request, because I considered the Catholic Question to have been then settled, at least for a time; and I was unwilling to revive the discussion of a subject, on which I had the misfortune to differ in Opinion from a Majority in each House of Parliament.—I have still that misfortune—but looking upon the situation of the Empire to be abundantly more hazardous now than it was three years ago, I have thought it a duty to declare publicly my approbation of a measure, calculated, I sincerely believe, above all other measures, to support the Independence of the Country—to secure the Stability of the Throne—to promote Peace among fellow-subjects, and Charity among fellow-christians,—and in no probable degree dangerous to the Constitution, either in Church or State.

R. L.

Calgarth Park,
1st June 1808.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN JUNE

1805.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE attention of the Public, as well as of the Legislature, has been lately much occupied in discussing the merits of a Petition, presented to both Houses of Parliament, by a numerous and respectable class of our fellow-subjects—The Roman Catholics of Ireland. Though the matter seems to be settled (and I am far from saying improperly settled) for the present, yet it will not, I hope, be deemed unsuitable to the relation in which I stand to yourselves, if I state to you such sentiments as have occurred to me, on each side of this important subject: and, that I may do this with

the utmost impartiality, it will be proper to begin with the consideration of two abstract questions connected with it.

The first question is this—Are Men justly excluded from the participation of Civil Rights on account of their Religious Opinions?—This question was ably discussed, near a century ago, by *Hoadly* on the one hand, and by *Sherlock* on the other; it has frequently, since their time, been brought before the Public; but it is still undecided. For my own part, I freely own that I have ever been disposed to answer this question, thus generally propounded, in the negative. Why then, it may be said to me, do you hesitate about granting to the Irish Catholics a removal of all the Civil Disabilities of which they complain? They differ from ourselves in Religious Opinions, but you grant that Religious Opinions are not a just cause for excluding Men from the participation of Civil Rights; there may be Policy, but there cannot be, according to your own

concession, any Justice in such exclusion —You may, perhaps, think it *expedient* to exclude the Catholics of Ireland and of England from the Houses of Parliament, but, according to your own Principles, the *justice* of the measure cannot be maintained.

To this I would reply—My Principles will never suffer me to admit that there can be, either in public or private life, any Expedience,—solid, lasting Expedience, —where there is no Justice. I never can allow that either national or individual Justice can be founded in temporary utility—as well might it be contended, that *Gain is Godliness.*

But, notwithstanding the admission of the truth of the abstract proposition— That Men are not justly excluded from Civil Rights on account of their Religious Opinions,—a man may reasonably hesitate about the Justice as well as the Policy of granting to Irish Catholics all they petition for: and the ground of hesitation is this—that the Religious

Opinions of Roman Catholics are not merely Religious—The History of Ages informs us, that the Church and the Court of Rome are blended together; that the Roman Pontiffs have constantly made Religion the Ladder of their Ambition, and so interwoven Political Principles with Religious Tenets as to disturb the tranquillity of the world.

The Church of Rome maintains—that our own and all the other Reformed Churches are Heretical—This is a mere Religious Opinion, unfounded, we contend, in Scripture, and unworthy, therefore, we are persuaded, of our animadversion. But when this Opinion is accompanied with a belief, that Faith need not be kept with Heretics, it becomes a pestilent Political Principle, which burned *Huss* at *Constance*, and *Cranmer* at *Oxford*.

The Church of Rome maintains, that all Non-Catholics are in a state of damnation.—This also is a mere Religious Opinion, uncharitable indeed, but unimportant

important to a Protestant; since we all have a just confidence that our Salvation will not depend on the sentence of a Pope. But when this Opinion is attended with a Persuasion, that it is a Catholic's duty to bring all men, *per fas ac nefas*, within the pale of the Roman Church, it becomes a Political Opinion, pregnant with a Zeal for Proselytism, and bringing forth Persecution; it lights up the fires of Smithfield, and of The Inquisition.

The Church of Rome maintains, that all Covenants, Engagements, Oaths, however public, however solemn and sincere, are *de jure* void, if they are opposite to the Catholic Faith, and the Rights of the Church.—This is a Religious Opinion, the truth of which I am ready to admit, if by the Catholic Faith be meant Faith in the Christian Religion, if by the Rights of the Church be meant the Church of Christ:—but I am not ready to admit the Identification of the Romish Faith with Gospel Faith; the Rights of the Church of Rome with the Rights of the Church of

Christ. The Catholics contend for this Identity; the Protestants deny it: and till it is, what in my judgment it never can be, incontrovertibly established, it is a most iniquitous Political Principle to admit, that Men are not bound to keep their oaths, under the assumption of the oaths being *ab initio* null and void, like those taken to perform impossible or illegal actions, which Moralists properly tell us are better broken than kept.

The Church of Rome maintains, that Christ granted to *Peter* a Supremacy in his Church, and that this Supremacy was not confined personally to *Peter*, but extended to all his Successors, Bishops of Rome—Tho' we conceive this opinion to be erroneous in both these points, yet were it merely a Religious Opinion, it would not be a sufficient ground for excluding any man from the enjoyment of Civil Rights—but when it is coupled with an opinion, that Princes excommunicated by the Successors of *St. Peter* may, by virtue of such Supremacy, be deposed and murdered by

their

their Subjects, it becomes an operative Political Principle, which would drag the whole Christian world under the yoke of the Roman Court; it is a Principle of such a dangerous tendency, that all Catholic, as well as Protestant States, have thought fit to guard against it. The Belgic States in particular, in 1730 passed the following decree—*Ne quis in provinciis suis ad Sacerdotis inter Pontificias munus admittatur, nisi qui priùs stipulatâ manu professus fuerit, se detestari impiam illam doctrinam quâ Pontifici jus competere creditur subditos ab obedientiæ erga Magistratum politicum vinculo solvendi; et sanctè promiserit se cœtui suo contrariam sententiam inculcaturum.*

Tho' I admit then the truth of the proposition which asserts, that men are not justly excluded from the participation of Civil Privileges on account of their Religious Opinions; yet when portentous Political Principles spring from Religious Opinions as scions from a root, and when Civil Actions originate in Political Principles, I cannot agree with those who think

think that the State has nothing to do with Men's Opinions Religious or Political, but merely with their Actions.

What Protestant State could be safe if the public Teachers of religion every where preached to the People, the lawfulness of the Pope's Supremacy in temporals?—What Christian State could be safe, if principles of Deism, of Mahometism, of Paganism, were publicly taught?—What State of any kind could exist, if Atheism and Antinomianism were generally inculcated from the pulpit?—If public teaching be called an Overt Act, and as such becomes cognizable by the Magistrate, the dispute is about words; for whilst an Opinion of any kind remains hidden in the deep recesses of a man's own heart, there is no sense in saying that the Magistrate has nothing to do with it, for he cannot take notice of what he does not know.

With Speculative Religious Opinions the State has no concern, and it should be very cautious in denying an opinion to be speculative,

speculative, on account of consequences which may be supposed to follow it in practice; but as there is more wisdom as well as more humanity, in preventing crimes than in punishing criminals, I cannot admit that the State has nothing to do with the Religious Opinions of its members.

The other abstract question which presents itself for discussion on this subject, may be thus expressed:—Ought not the Established Religion of every Country to be the Religion professed by the Majority of its Inhabitants?—By an Established Religion I mean, a Religion the Ministers of which are paid by the State.

There seem to me to be three distinct modes of forming an Established Church. One is that followed by ourselves; consisting of Ministers paid by the State, and extending a complete Toleration to those who differ from us. The Established Religion of the Kirk of Scotland is of the same kind; where, tho' the Presbyterian is the Established Church, the Episcopalian

palian is fully tolerated.—Another mode is that which is at present practised in France; where the Catholic is the Established Religion, and a precarious Toleration is given to all other Sects; except to those of the Lutheran and of the Reformed persuasions; for these are not simply tolerated, but enjoy a kind of co-establishment, their Ministers being paid by the State.—The third mode is that adopted by the State of Massachuset's Bay, and by most of the United States of America; in which it is decreed that "every denomination of Christians, demeaning "themselves peaceably, shall be equally "under the protection of the Law; and "no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be "established by Law." I consider the Christian Religion as established in America, because every man is by Law obliged to pay towards the maintenance of a Christian Minister, though his quota may, at his request, be paid to the Minister of that Sect to which he himself belongs.

Which

Which of these different modes of forming Religious Establishments is best fitted for the advancement of scriptural knowledge, and the promotion of Christian Edification, and public peace, is a speculation not necessary to be discussed in this place; and a doubt may arise whether it can, in truth, admit a general definite solution: for in order to its decision, a reference must be had to the nature of the government under which men live, to the disposition of the people, to the state of letters amongst them, and to other considerations, which being very different in different countries, and changeable in the same, no general conclusion can, perhaps, comprehend them all.

But as to the question, Whether, when there is an Established Religion, it ought or ought not to be, in strict justice, the Religion of the Majority? it seems, at first view, that it must be answered in the affirmative; and hence it may be inferred, that the Established Religion in Ireland ought to be the Catholic Religion, inasmuch

much as a great Majority of the inhabitants of Ireland are Catholics. And if this reasoning be just, is it not a great solecism to say, that the members of what ought to be the Established Religion of a Country, shall not enjoy the Civil Rights of that Country?

This conclusion seems reasonable on the first view of the subject, and arguing on general principles; yet two observations may be properly made on this point, which, in the judgment of many, will wholly invalidate the conclusion here drawn.—It ought, in the first place, to be remarked that, since the Union with Ireland, the Protestant Church is the Church of the Majority of the People composing the British Empire; the Protestants in Great Britain, in Ireland, and in the Colonies, exceeding the Catholics in, probably, not a less ratio than that of six to one.—In the second place—does not the proposition admit of some exception, which asserts, that an Established Religion ought, in all cases, to be the

Religion

Religion of the Majority of the People? —It may happen that the property, by which the Establishment is to be maintained, is principally in the hands of the Minority of the People, and this I apprehend is the case in Ireland.

Strictly speaking, it is not consonant to the principles of impartial Justice, that the property of Protestants should be expended in maintaining a Catholic Establishment, from which they, as Protestants, can derive no benefit. This I think cannot be demanded of the Government as a debt of Justice due to the Majority of the People of Ireland—But may it not be offered to them as a gift on the altar of Christian Charity; and will it not be accepted by them, as a pledge of Brotherly Conciliation, as a surety for Civil Union, and Public Tranquillity?

I do not think it necessary to pursue this abstract reasoning to a greater length, especially as it has been said, that what is theoretically right may be practically wrong. I cannot, indeed, admit this—

truth

truth is truth—right is right—justice is justice—whether it may suit men's interests, passions, and prejudices to practise them or not; and it is all men's duty, in their public as well as private capacities, to square their conduct by the rule of right. Yet times and circumstances ought to be considered, not as opposing but as assisting theoretical conclusions. *Solon*, in legislating for the Athenians, had an idea of a more perfect Constitution than he gave them; but he gave them such Laws as they were then capable of receiving, agreeably to the old maxim—*quodcunque recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis*; and our Saviour in saying to His Disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect, "as your Father that is in Heaven is per-"fect," proposed to them, not what was practically wrong, but a standard of perfection which, though above their reach, was well fitted to excite their endeavours to attain it. In like manner, abstract truths in Ethics and in Politics ought to be precisely stated and admitted, that Men

Men may, as much as possible, approximate their conduct to them.

The Irish Catholics are willing to take the Oath of Allegiance prescribed by the Irish Parliament in 1782—and the British Catholics are willing to take that prescribed by the British Parliament in 1791. And as both Legislatures have considered all those who take these Oaths, as good and loyal subjects to his Majesty, his Crown, and Government,—Why then, it may be said, are the Catholics alone excluded from a Right, which Men of all other religious denominations enjoy? Presbyterians, Independents, Socinians, Unitarians, Men of every Sect, however differing from each other and from the Established Church in doctrine, worship, and discipline, are all allowed to sit and vote in Parliament.—By what principle of equal and impartial Justice are the Catholics alone excluded from that privilege?—An answer to this complaint has long ago occurred to my mind; and, after much careful sifting of the subject, I profess

that I cannot see its fallacy; the answer in brief, without entering into historical detail, is this:—Catholics are not allowed to sit in Parliament as Legislators, because Catholics are not allowed to sit on the Throne as Kings—If it is contended, that the Restraint ought to remain upon the King, how can it be argued that it ought not to remain upon others?—Must a disability be extinguished as to a Catholic Peer or Commoner, and yet continue, in full force, as to a Catholic King?—If it is argued, that the disability ought to cease in both cases,—as Protestants, jealous of the civil and religious liberty which we have enjoyed, for above a century, under Protestant Princes, we firmly reprobate any relaxation of the Law which prohibits a Catholic King, from ascending the Throne of these Kingdoms.

It may however be said, and properly said, that the influence of a Catholic King is very different, both in degree and kind, from that of a Catholic Peer or Commoner in Parliament—that a Catholic King may, by

by his influence, oppress a Protestant People, and subvert their Religion; but that a few Catholic Legislators, when mixed with a great majority of Protestants, cannot be dangerous, either to the Established Church of these Dominions, or to the avowed principles of all the Reformed Churches in Europe. To apprehend danger from the admission of Catholics into Parliament proceeds not, I humbly think, from any correct view of the habitudes of human nature; from any enlightened foresight of future events; or enlarged notions of political expedience; but rather, from an inadvertence to our present situation, as connected with, or, more truly speaking, as unconnected with the rest of Europe, and from a too strong attachment to the prejudices of Education.—We have from our childhood been taught to combine into one Idea the Pope and the Pretender, as constituting an object of our detestation; united they were dangerous, but a Pope without a Pretender can be no reasonable subject

for our alarm; nor can the Catholics be now considered as dangerous, especially when they disclaim and solemnly abjure, as they have done, any intention to overturn the present Protestant Church Establishment for the purpose of substituting a Catholic Establishment in its stead; and when they declare, that they will not exercise any privilege to which they may become entitled, to disturb the Protestant Religion and Protestant Government.—This reasoning is not devoid of strength; I submit it to your consideration.

I know it has been said—That Popery is still the same,—that the Church of Rome has never made any material alteration in its principles or practice—that if it had the power it would not want the will to persecute Protestants,—that *Bellarmine*'s maxim—"*Hæreticos non esse bello petendos quando sunt fortiores nobis*"—is still the maxim of the Court of Rome, and accounts for its present moderation;—that the connexion between the

the Religious Opinions and the Political Principles of Catholics, is not a matter of conjecture but of historical fact and lamentable experience;—that the Inquisition still subsists in the most rigid Catholic Countries, Portugal and Spain; and that it subsists, not merely in name, but in reality, it not being yet thirty years since a Gentleman would have been burned as a formal Heretic at *Madrid*, had not the Pope himself dissuaded the execution of the sentence, by observing that the time for such Spectacles was past. I remember having read, above fifty years ago, in one of the volumes of the German *Ephemerides*, an Account of a Woman who was condemned for having had, as was absurdly pretended, carnal commerce with the Devil; and it is little above twenty years since a young Woman was burned by the Inquisition at *Seville*, on the same accusation.

On the other hand, however, it ought to be observed that Kings and Princes of the Catholic Church, not only in Germany,

France, and Italy, but in Spain and Portugal, have been gradually throwing off the yoke of the Roman Pontiff in temporals; that no person condemned by the Inquisition, even in the two last mentioned Countries, can now be executed till the sentence is confirmed by the Civil Government; that in several of the Italian States this Tribunal (for which I can find no epithet sufficiently expressive of my abhorrence) has been wholly abolished; that the light of learning is beginning to illumine the minds of the College of Cardinals, of the Clergy, and of the Laity of the Church of Rome. Catholics have, for above fifty years, been every where permitted, by a Decree of the Pope, to have the Scriptures translated into their Mother tongue. The Pope's decree against the motion of the Earth, has been annulled; future Commentators on *Newton*, will not for fear of the Inquisition be compelled to the use of that miserable declaration which the famous Jesuits *Le Seur* and *Jacquier* prefixed to their Commentary on the third Book of the

the *Principia*, in the following words:—*Newtonus in hoc tertio libro Telluris motæ hypothesin assumit. Autoris Propositiones aliter explicari non poterant nisi eadem quoque facta hypothesi. Hinc alienam coacti sumus gerere personam; cæterùm latis a summis Pontificibus contra Telluris motum decretis nos obsequi profitemur.* The Demons of superstition, fanaticism, and intolerance are every where shrinking from the Sun of Science, and seeking to hide themselves in darkness and oblivion. Some few Individuals may yet perhaps worship them in secret; but the *Latin*, the *Greek*, the *Reformed* Churches—the great mass of men believing in the divine Mission of Jesus of Nazareth, and constituting the Church of Christ, are, in every Nation of Europe, and in every State of America, breaking down their Altars, and spurning the fetters of Bigotry, Ignorance, and Ecclesiastical Domination, by which their Ancestors were enthralled.

Spiritual Tyranny and Persecution, it must be owned, have not been exclusively

confined to the Church of Rome; every Reformed Church has, in its turn, been afflicted and disgraced by them in a greater or less degree; they are, however, now every where giving way to sober sense and Gospel Charity; intelligent Protestants, and intelligent Catholics, abhor them with equal zeal, and sincerity. This candour and moderation does not proceed (as some seem to think) from Latitudinarianism, from Indifferentism, from Scepticism —No:—They proceed from the noblest source, from the prevalence of Science; which, in shewing Men the imperfection of their knowledge in physical matters, induces them to abate their self-confidence in other matters; and disposes them to treat with forbearance and respect those who differ from them on any matter: and they proceed too from the influence of real, genuine, Gospel Christianity; which breathes nothing but humility of individual judgment, mutual condescension, and general philanthropy.

The Catholic Church, in his Majesty's Dominions,

Dominions, seems to me to be eagerly aspiring to the honour which was possessed by the Catholic Church of France, long before the Revolution in that Country—the honour of being esteemed and stigmatized at Rome as an half-heretical Church. It is probable, I think, that in less than a century all the Catholic Churches in Christendom will become as heretical, as the Church of England and the other Reformed Churches have long been esteemed by the Roman Conclave.

But great changes in Religious Opinions cannot be speedily effected. We in this age abhor persecution, as opposite alike to the interests of States, and the precepts of Religion; our Ancestors thought otherwise on both these points, and practised it, seemingly, without remorse. *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, and other eminent Reformers, were never able to divest themselves of that spirit of intolerance which they had imbibed from the Church of Rome, in which they had been educated. Even Archbishop *Usher* and the Suffragans of his province,

province, seem not to have clearly understood the full extent of true Christian Liberty, of not affecting dominion over God's Heritage, when they remonstrated against the design of Lord *Falkland*, to allow the Catholics in Ireland the free exercise of their religion, on the principle of its being an impiety to grant such an indulgence to the Church of Rome, which they branded as superstitious and idolatrous.

To root out an inveterate prejudice from the mind is not, a less difficult operation than to remove a natural blemish from the body. Children in Catholic Countries are taught, as soon as they can speak, that all persons except Catholics are Heretics—that all Heretics are in a state of damnation—that it is a crime to think well of them, and a meritorious act to convert them—that Popes and General Councils are infallible—that every thing which the Church of Rome enjoins as a matter of faith or a matter of practice, must be done and believed, under the risk of incurring the penalty of

of the pains of Purgatory, or of Hell. It cannot be expected, that such principles, on such a subject as Religion, thus sucked in with the mother's milk, can be speedily changed in the bulk of the Catholics. Principles, thus produced, cannot be eradicated by Penal Laws, and they are confirmed by oppression: they will be shaken by the forbearance and moderation of Government; and they will be wholly changed by the progress of general knowledge. This progress is slow in all countries and on all subjects, and it is particularly slow on subjects of Religion, and in countries where the best books are prohibited; it will, however, at length prevail—*magna est veritas et prævalebit*—it will, not only in Ireland but throughout the Christian world, vindicate to mankind the Right of private Judgment, in all matters respecting God and Conscience; and it will put an end to Infidelity by exhibiting Christianity in its proper form—It is at least my fixed opinion, that the Christian Religion will stand,

stand, in every country, the free investigation of learned men; but that the superstitious practices, the uncharitable and persecuting principles of the Roman Church, will stand it in none.

If the Roman Church has not, since the revival of Letters, openly renounced any of the doctrines which the Protestants esteem erroneous; or abandoned any of the ceremonies which they judge superstitious; this ought not to surprise any one who considers, how difficult it is, even for an Individual, who has once delivered an Opinion on a solemn subject, ever to change, at least publicly to own. that he has changed it. There is, in this respect, a kind of Popery in every one of us; we conceive ourselves to be infallible in Judgment, and thence become incorrigible in conduct; we are ashamed of owning ourselves to have been in an error, preferring a culpable consistency to a rational change of sentiment, and conduct.

But if this perseverance in wrong often appertains to Individuals, it much more frequently

frequently appertains to Public Bodies; in them the disgrace of error, or even the criminality of conduct, belongs to so many, that no one is ashamed of the part which belongs to himself. I am not in truth prepared to say with Archbishop *Tillotson*, learned and liberal as I esteem him—"It "was the humour of Babylon of old" (as the Prophet tells us, Jerem. li. 9.) "that "she would not be healed, and this is still "the temper of the Church of Rome; "they hate to be reformed, and rather "than acknowledge themselves to have "been once in an error, they will con-"tinue in it for ever." I cannot adopt this sentiment, because it includes an uncharitable Judgment of such men as *Bossuet*, *Fleury*, *Fenelon*, *Du Pin*, and many other ornaments, not merely of the Church of Rome, but of Human Nature itself: I dare not say of such men that they hated to be reformed. The Catholics may say the same of *Barrow*, *Tillotson*, *Tenison*, and of an hundred other divines of our own and of other Reformed Churches.

Churches. This mutual imputation of hating to be reformed, of obstinacy in error, is no proof of any thing on either side, except of that error into which the greatest men of all sides usually fall, when they assume authority over other men's faith, and are positive in the orthodoxy of their own; when they exclusively arrogate to themselves and their party infallibility of Judgment, and sincerity of profession; imputing hypocrisy, ignorance, and obstinacy, to all those who dispute their pretensions.

But though it should be granted that the Catholic Religion, as contained in the Canons of the Church of Rome, is materially the same now that it had been for many Ages before the Reformation; that it was at the Council of *Trent* after the Reformation; that it appears to have been in the Creed of Pope *Pius* the IVth after the Council of *Trent*,—in the Bull *Unigenitus* of *Clement* XI. in 1713—in the letter of the Legate *Ghilini* to the Irish Catholic Bishops in 1768—and in

that of the Cardinal *Castelli* to the same in 1776—though all this should be granted, yet a very great change has, I think, taken place in the sentiments of enlightened Individual Catholics within the last fifty years. This change of the sentiments of Individuals always precedes, and finally accomplishes the reform of public bodies, in a greater or less space of time, and with greater or less difficulty, according to the circumstances which attend it.

Zuinglius and *Luther* were not the first Individual Catholics whose sentiments were adverse to the corruptions of the Church of Rome; others before their time, and many more during the time of the Reformation, reprobated, as much as they did, the various deviations of the Catholic Church from Gospel truth, and primitive simplicity of public worship, but were, for different reasons, contented to submit to them. Thousands thought then as *Erasmus* thought, when he said, "I follow "the decisions of the Pope and the "Emperor when they are right, which is "acting

" acting religiously; I submit to them " when they are wrong, which is acting " prudently; and I think it lawful for " good men to behave themselves thus, " when there is no hope of obtaining any " more."

Many, both of the Clergy and Laity in the Catholic Church, and many, probably, in every Reformed Church, acquiesce in some things which they do not wholly approve; and they may be justified in doing so, on various grounds.—The things they disapprove may be *inter τα ἀδιαφορα*; or, if not absolutely indifferent, matters of trifling importance—or, if things of great importance, they may not admit of amendment without a risk of more evil than good attending the reform—or, they may be things of so abstruse a nature, that a man who thinks modestly of his own attainments or is disposed to Pyrrhonism, may not have formed so decisive a judgment concerning them, as to induce him, by contending for them, to become the occasion of disunion in the Church—or, lastly,

lastly, prudence and constitutional timidity of temper may restrain many, as they restrained *Erasmus*, from opposing where there is no chance of overcoming.

Reasons such as these may keep men for a time in error, but the error will be at length removed; and its removal will be accelerated by a liberal permission to every man to search the Scriptures for his Creed, and to comport his practice, in the worship of God, to the dictates of his conscience, without subjecting him to any penalties, without depriving him of any privileges, on account of his religion.

Christians of every denomination, and in every country, begin to be ashamed of that ἀμέλεια της ἀνθολκης, which blinded the understandings, inflamed the passions, and disgraced the manners of their ancestors. There is not, I hope and believe, an intelligent Protestant in all Great Britain who would now cry out as *Illyricus* did—that all Churches ought to be deserted, and insurrections raised, rather than Surplices be worn;—Nor an intelligent Catholic in

all his Majesty's Dominions, who would now adopt the language of the Jesuit, who declared—that a single taper in the Church of Rome ought not to be put out, though its extinction would convert all the Hugonots in France.

It is this general change of Sentiment among Christians, which the diffusion of learning has introduced, and experience of its utility has confirmed, which has induced me to think favourably of the Catholic Petition.—But what particular proof, it may be asked, is there of this change of Sentiment? There is the strongest that can be given or ought to be required—The Protestation of those who have presented the Petition.—I cannot withhold my belief of their sincerity; they are Men of Education, Men of Sense, Men of Property, Probity, and fair Estimation in the world. —To say that such Men rely on mental reservations, on Jesuitical equivocations, on scholastic subtilties, on Pontifical absolutions, on I know not what miserable subterfuges, to evade the obligation of the most

most solemn promises and declarations, to say this is to banish fidelity from the earth, it is to degrade the dignity of human nature, it is to calumniate the integrity of human kind.

But admitting that the Subscribers to the Catholic Petition are in themselves highly worthy of credit; and admitting also that they speak the sentiments of thousands of their Catholic Brethren in Ireland, as enlightened and as respectable as themselves; yet it may be demanded—What proof is there, that the great Mass of the Irish Catholics concur with them in sentiment respecting that moderation towards the Established Protestant Church, and that attachment to the Civil Constitution of the State, which they have so liberally, and, I doubt not, so sincerely professed? This question is certainly not undeserving attention; and I own that the answer which might, in general, be properly given to such a question, may not be applicable to Ireland.—It might in general be said, that the Common People,

in every country, are influenced by the manners, and actuated by the principles of their superiors in learning, rank, power, and property.—This answer is not applicable to Ireland, if it be true, that the bulk of the Catholics in that Country are principally under the influence of parochial or itinerant Priests,—that the Priests are under the influence of their Bishops,—that their Bishops are under the influence of the Roman Court,—and that the Roman Court is unceasing in its endeavours to re-establish Popery in every part of Europe, and especially in Ireland. Whether this be the real state of things in that country cannot be properly judged of except by persons resident in that country; nor even by them, if they give way to excessive apprehensions, arising from local circumstances and partial considerations.

It is a most illiberal mode of arguing to attribute principles to any body of men which they expressly disclaim, because these principles had influenced the conduct of their ancestors. The Catholics were

were justly censurable during the reigns of Elizabeth and James 1st; and in later periods, their efforts to restore the exiled family merited the animadversion of Government (though one cannot but admire the principle, even of misplaced loyalty, by which they were actuated) but such efforts have long ceased, and there is no probability of their ever being renewed.

Many of the doctrines of the Church of Rome we consider as unfounded in Scripture—many of its pretensions to superiority over other Churches as unsupported by history—much of the Ritual of its worship as full of superstition—but the Catholics think otherwise on all these points; and not being answerable to Protestants for opinions merely religious, I do not see how these opinions can constitute equitable grounds for refusing them the Rights they petition for. They are sufficient grounds for Protestants not becoming Catholics, but I cannot think them sufficient grounds for preventing Catholics from becoming

free Citizens of a free State; and they will not, it is presumed, become less loyal from being made more free.

Nor is the notion of the general change of sentiment which is taking place among Catholics unsupported by particular occurrences. The Pope's Infallibility is not now what it was formerly esteemed to be, since Catholics, learned and liberal Catholics, tell us—"that Kings no longer dread "the effects of Pontific rage—that Vatican "fulminations are no longer formidable— "that Roman Infallibility is laughed at "even at Rome itself—that a Pope's Bull "is, as such, as little regarded at *Paris*, "*Vienna*, *Madrid*, and *Lisbon*, as it would "be at *Berlin*, *Copenhagen*, *Petersburgh*, "or *London*."

The Pope's Supremacy we are told— "rightly understood, and such as it is at "present generally held, not only by the "Catholics of Great Britain, but by those "of most other countries, has nothing in "it dangerous to any State or Government "—it consists merely in acknowledging

" the Bishop of Rome to be in rank, ho-
" nour and dignity, the first Prelate in the
" Christian Church." Though this Papal pre-eminence might be justly questioned, yet there is not, I trust, in the Eastern or Western Church a single Christian Bishop who has so improper an idea of christian humility, as to be desirous of contesting this point with the Roman Pontiff; and those Popes will certainly most deserve this distinction, who are least zealous to retain it. Whether this account of the Pope's Infallibility and Supremacy (the two most dangerous tenets, politically speaking, of the Roman Church) be generally admitted by Catholics or not, I know not; but it is certainly admitted by some of them, and its admission is a proof, that some of the most obnoxious principles of the Church of Rome, begin to be considered by learned Catholics as usurped appendages, obsolete ordinances, and indefensible claims.

In further confirmation of this change of sentiment, even in the Head of the

Catholic Church, two remarkable facts may be mentioned. In the Oath taken by the Archbishops and Bishops of that Church there is the following clause—*Hæreticos, schismaticos, et rebelles domino nostro (Papæ) pro posse persequar et impugnabo.* About twenty-five years ago the Empress of Russia gave permission to the Roman Catholics in her Dominions openly to exercise their Religion, and to be under the Government of their own Prelates. She and her Court attended the ceremony when the first Archbishop of *Mohilow* was to receive the Pall. When the customary oath was tendered to the Archbishop he refused to swear according to the above clause; the ceremony was suspended, and the assembly broken up *re infectâ.* An express was sent to the Pope, begging instructions how to proceed; and the Pope ordered the objectionable clause to be omitted, and no obstruction to be given to the good intention of the Empress.—The other fact is of the same kind. In 1791, on the representation of the Catholic Archbishops

bishops of Ireland to his Holiness, that the clause here mentioned gave great offence to many persons, who through ignorance or malice misinterpreted (as they said) the same; it was ordered to be omitted, and the same form of oath to be taken as was used at the inauguration of the Archbishop of *Mohilow*. I cannot think that these concessions were a mere artifice of the Roman Conclave to gain and retain something, when they could not gain and retain every thing; I attribute them to the liberality of sentiment which is beginning to pervade the deliberations of that body.

I have now troubled you, Brethren, at great length, on a very nice and important subject; and I have done this, not with any view of directing your judgment, but in compliance with my sense of duty in delivering my own. Other men may form a better, but none can form a more impartial judgment, on a subject of acknowledged difficulty.

I wish not to be misunderstood by you; after

after an experience of your candour for twenty-three years, I have no fear of being misrepresented by you; and I trust that I shall be believed by you when I declare—that if I foresaw any Increase of Popery in Christendom; any Danger to the Protestant Church in general; or to that distinguished part of it established in these Kingdoms, from granting the Catholics of Ireland what they petition for; I would have wished that my hand had been stiffened by the stroke of death, before it had written what I have now read to you.

But believing, as I do, that the number of Catholics in Ireland will be lessened, as the liberality with which they are treated is increased—thinking, as I do, that Popery is every where succumbing under the general diffusion of knowledge—and abhorring, as I do, from my heart, all theological rancour, all unchristian contention about non-essentials, all persecution for diversity of opinion even in what are generally esteemed essential parts

of

of Christianity,—and convinced, as I am, that Ireland cannot be united to this Kingdom as She ought to be, without a removal of the chief disabilities under which she now labours;—and persuaded, as I am, that the permanent safety of the whole Empire depends on such an Union;—I have no hesitation in professing that I contemplate, with singular satisfaction, the enlightened and impartial spirit with which the Petition has been discussed in both Houses of Parliament.—It has not, indeed, been granted in either House; but that cannot excite the wonder of any one who has observed, how seldom a point of such great political importance is accomplished at once. I am so far from wishing a measure of this magnitude to be hurried to a decision, that I entirely agree in sentiment with those who think, that it ought never to be accomplished, except with the general uninfluenced concurrence of those, on both sides, who think themselves interested in its decision. Great changes in Church or State are seldom

seldom well made, till the minds of men are generally disposed to receive them.

The Catholics of Ireland have sustained, perhaps, a disappointment, but they have suffered no injury—no injury, because every Government has a right to provide for its own preservation by any internal regulations consistent with the Law of God, and with the Rights of other Independent States; and if the Government thinks that its preservation cannot be secured, but by the exclusion of certain individuals from certain privileges, it has a *right* to exclude them. The excluded individuals may contend, that Government judges improperly concerning its own security. But whether it judges properly or improperly, must be decided by a Majority of voices. The Law of the Land is the Will of the Majority of its Inhabitants, virtually promulgated to all, by the concurrent voice of the King and the two Houses of Parliament—If any individual refuses to submit to the general will, it may be a question of some difficulty to

to decide, whether it ought not to be lawful for him to quit the community; but it can be no question, that, whilst he continues a voluntary member of it, he can have no right to oppose the general will.

Things however may be lawful on both sides, which may not be expedient on either; and it ought ever to be remembered that in all disputes, on national politics or individual concerns, mutual concession is best suited to the imbecility of human intellect, and best adapted to the allaying of intemperate heats, and choking in their birth passions producing disturbance, and ending in desolation.

Pertinacity in opinion more frequently arises from a partial view of a subject than from a full comprehension of it, and certainly is not of itself any proof of rectitude of judgment. I at least am so sensible of the pressure of the arguments on both sides of this great question, and so diffident of my having come to a proper conclusion concerning it, that, though I cannot say as *Cicero* makes *Cotta* say

say on a question still more difficult—*Ego vero opto redargui me*—I can say with him—*ea quæ disputavi, disserere malui quam judicare.*

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN 1788.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

TO THE

REVEREND THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

THIS

CHARGE,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS

WITH GREAT RESPECT INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT

R. LANDAFF.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN 1788.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I CONSIDER this solemnity not only as affording me an opportunity of addressing you, but as giving you a similar opportunity of addressing me; of informing me of any circumstance in which you think that it is in my power, as your Bishop, to promote the general Interests of Religion, or the particular Interests of this Diocese. We are all of us members of the same Body, of which Christ is the Head; and though a respect to order, and decency, and the example of antiquity, may require a diversity of administrations, yet the one great object of saving the Souls of Men, should produce in us all,

an uniformity of Principle, and a correspondent co-operation in Practice.

Since I last met you assembled in this place, I received a Petition, signed by many respectable Clergymen of the Diocese, in behalf of themselves and others; directed to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty; stating the great difficulty they met with in purchasing Lands, with the Money which had fallen by Lot to their several Churches; and praying relief. I did as my Duty required me to do; I presented the Petition to the Governors, and gave it what support I could. My wish was—that the Governors should have freed themselves from the trouble and expence attending the Management of their funded Property, and have done at the same time an essential Service to many of the present poor Ministers of the Establishment, by appropriating, in lieu of each two hundred pounds which had fallen by Lot to any Church, a quantity of Stock equal in value to it. The Stocks were then very low, the whole

of

of the funded Property of the Corporation would have been, however, about equal, even in the state of the Funds at that time, to the discharge of the several demands which the Churches, to which Lots had been appropriated, had then upon it; each Clergyman would have received an Interest of at least ten pounds a year for every two hundred pounds to which his Church had become intitled; and the apprehension of a large portion of the Land of the Kingdom falling into *Mortmain*, which though ill-founded is very general, would have been done away.—I was not so fortunate as to obtain any relief for the Petitioners; nor do I now say that the Governors judged wrong in not attending to my wishes; however that point may be thought of, the matter of complaint was discussed with great candour and attention, and I will now explain to you, in few words, the Grounds on which the Governors proceeded in not altering their mode of augmenting small Livings.—On examining the Accounts, it

appeared, that of all the Money which had come into the hands of the Governors, either from the First Fruits and Tenths, or from private Benefaction, since the first Establishment of the Corporation in 1714, about three fourths of it had been actually laid out in Land; and as Land, where it can be procured on good terms, is certainly preferable to a payment in Money, it was thought adviseable that the remaining fourth should be laid out in the same way; and that the small interest of *2 l. per cent.* should be continued, in order to excite the assiduity of the Persons concerned in the receipt of it to look out for proper Purchases. The Governors, no doubt, instead of two, make four or five *per cent.* of all the Money which has been allotted to the several Churches in the Kingdom, and which, for want of being laid out in Land, remains in their hands till called for: this circumstance gives rise to a considerable annual saving, but the manner in which this saving is disposed of, is highly

highly just and proper; it is not permitted to accumulate *sine limite*, but laid out, a considerable portion of it at least is laid out, every year in augmenting many more Livings by Lot, than could be augmented by the First Fruits and Tenths alone. The annual amount of the First Fruits and Tenths would not be sufficient to augment, with 200 *l.* a piece, above fifty or sixty Livings, but the redundance of the Interest I have mentioned, enables the Governors annually to augment above twice that number. Hence, though some Individuals, to whom Lots have fallen, may think themselves hardly dealt with, in not receiving the full Interest of their Lots (though it may be remarked that in the original Constitution of the Society no Interest at all was allowed) yet other Individuals are benefited exactly in the same proportion in which they appear to be injured; and the Church, in general, is a gainer, inasmuch as men are spurred to procure purchases in Land which otherwise would,

probably, seldom be attempted. All the Livings in the Kingdom under 20*l.* a year, have received one or more augmentations by Lot, and, at a meeting of the Governors on the second of last month, it was agreed, that Livings under 30*l.* should begin to be augmented by Lot. With respect to the Diocese of Landaff, the Governors have appropriated for the Augmentation of Poor Livings in it, since the first Establishment of the Bounty to the present Time, the sum of 37,850*l.*; to this sum may be added 1,600*l.* intended for the Augmentation of 8 Livings drawn by Lot on the 7th of April last, and which, if confirmed, will make the whole sum amount to 39,450*l.* Of this sum 21,750*l.* has been laid out in the purchase of Land, and several other Purchases, which the Governors have lately approved of for Livings in this Diocese, will speedily be completed.

Another circumstance which I think proper to mention to you, respects a Publication which I undertook, with

a view of being of service to the younger Clergy in general, and especially to the younger Clergy in this Diocese. The Course of my Studies, and the Nature of my Office in the University of *Cambridge*, brought me acquainted with a great variety of Theological Books: I was sensible that many young Students in Divinity were often at a loss what Books to read; and many others were often deterred, by the narrowness of their Fortunes, from procuring such as might be proper for them: to obviate both these difficulties, I made a selection of some of the best tracts which I knew of, and published them in six octavo volumes, at as easy a price as could possibly be afforded. In the beginning of this undertaking, I could not get any Bookseller in London to run the risk of the Publication; but being persuaded of its utility, I determined to persevere in it at my own hazard. When the Work was finished from the Press, a Bookseller ventured to purchase the whole Impression of 1500

Copies; and he informs me that it is nearly sold. A new * Edition will never, I believe, be attempted; I could wish therefore that, whilst any sets do remain to be disposed of, such young Clergy of the Diocese as are not well provided with Books, would furnish themselves with this Collection of Theological Tracts. Having no manner of concern with the sale of it, I am less scrupulous in recommending this publication to their attention; it contains a great variety of Tracts, some of them written by Ministers of the Established Church, some by Dissenting Ministers, some by Laymen, and all of them (the Preface and the Appendix excepted) by Men of unquestioned Ability. I meant, especially, to benefit by this work, such young Persons as have not been educated at either of our Universities; many such are in this Diocese; I have done my duty towards them, in affording them such means of instructing themselves as would not disgrace any University

* A second Edition was published in 1791.

University in the world; and I pray God that they may diligently use either the means which I have afforded them, or any better which may be suggested to them.

My attention has not been confined solely to the furnishing the younger Clergy with the proper means of instruction; you will perceive, in reading the little Tract which I have given to those whom you have brought to be confirmed by me, how anxious I am that the minds of young persons in general, shall be imbued with proper principles; and I beseech you to unite your endeavours to mine in this essential point.

In consequence of his Majesty's Proclamation, recommending to the Attention of the Magistrates a due enforcement of the Laws respecting Morals, a number of Gentlemen of the first Rank, Fortune, and Character, have formed themselves into a Society, for promoting this salutary end. Every Attempt of the kind is laudable in the persons who make it; and we should all of us do what we can in seconding

their

their good intentions; but I freely own to you, that my hopes of a general Reformation of Manners are founded on a Reformation of the Education of Children, more than on that of Men grown old and hardened in Vice. We have much unhappy experience of the inefficacy of Laws in producing amendment of manners. Our Laws against swearing, sabbath-breaking, tippling, gaming, duelling, fornicating, are sufficiently severe: nor is it wholly to be attributed to the inattention of the Magistrate that they do not produce their proper effect; for whilst the makers of Laws set an example of breaking them, and whilst the manners of the people in general are in opposition to the prescripts of our Statutes, it will not be possible for the most able and active Magistrates to attempt the execution of them with any prospect of success. The present situation of this Kingdom resembles that of ancient Rome, when an inundation of the Wealth of the Universe had corrupted the Manners of its Citizens—the power of *Fashion* was superior

superior to that of *Law*—*Mores leges perduxerunt in potestatem suam*—may as truly be said of us, as it was said of the *Romans*, even in the days of *Plautus*. All nations, indeed, of which we have any account, in becoming rich have become profligate; a torrent of depraved morality has in every opulent State, borne down with irresistible violence those mounds and fences by which the wisdom of Legislators attempted to protect chastity, sobriety, and virtue. If any check can be given to the corruption of a State increasing in riches, and declining in morals, it must be given, not by Laws enacted to alter the inveterate habits of Men, but by Education adapted to form the hearts of Children to a proper sense of moral and religious excellence. The instilling into the minds of the rising Generation great Piety towards God, and the absolute necessity of paying an uniform and unqualified obedience to the Laws of the Gospel, in opposition to the disorderly propensities of Sense, and the immoral maxims of the World, is an employment

employment of all others most befitting our Characters as Ministers of the Gospel, and as Servants of the State. As Ministers of the Gospel, we co-operate with the benevolent Author of the Universe, when we endeavour to train up free and intelligent Beings to such degrees of moral perfection as may fit them for the participation of future Glory; as Servants of the State, we promote the peace and good order of the Community, when we endeavour to throw the controul of Piety over the impetuosity of Appetite, when we oppose the restraint of Religion to the seduction of the World; for the tranquillity, nay, the very existence of every civil community, is endangered when Religion has lost its influence over the minds of its members. The community, indeed, may continue for a time to rot in its own corruption; to go on from bad to worse; to increase in commerce, riches, and luxury, and to decrease in frugality, temperance, and piety; it may even exhibit indications of strength and vigour; but they are like the

the indications of that man's sanity whose health depends upon his high living, the very means of his well-looking are the instruments of his destruction. The discipline which subsisted in the primitive Church is at an end, and no one thinks of reviving it; the manners of Christians cannot, in this age, be corrected by ecclesiastical Mulcts, and Penances. Libertinism and Irreligion rear their standards in every village, and no one is afraid or ashamed of inlisting under them. If Men can escape the warrant of the *Justice*, and the staff of the *Constable*, they trouble themselves not at all about the Admonitions of their Pastors, the Censures of their Church, or the Terrors of their Religion. One thing, notwithstanding, still remains to us, in which our Usefulness may be made apparent, and in which we may fulfil a main end of our Ministration; and this consists in our superintending the Education of those who, without our care, will have no religious Education at all; no sense of a supreme Being; no hope of the Redemption

Redemption which is in Jesus; but who will continue to be Pagans, as it were, in the Bosom of the Church of Christ.

Notwithstanding that Liberty of Action, and Freedom of Volition, which are properly esteemed parts of the human Constitution, it is certain that all men are, in a great degree, what habit and education make them to be. A mighty oak which spreads its branches and thrusts forth its roots in a thousand complicated forms, is said, by Naturalists, not to differ in figure from the almost imperceptible Germ which vegetated in its parent Acorn; and it may, perhaps, as justly be observed, that the moral form and character of every grown-up man is little else than the developement and the enlargement of those principles of thinking and habits of acting, which were delineated by chance, or impressed by design, on the tablet of his heart at any early Age. Of what unspeakable importance then is it, that Parents, Pastors, Tutors, Schoolmasters, should all conspire, in their respective stations, in teaching Children

Children the Principles of Christianity, and in persuading them to respect, on all occasions, the Gospel as the Rule of their Actions! I know it may be disputed, whether the present times are worse than former times have been; our vices may be different from those of our Ancestors without being greater; but it will not be disputed, that they are great enough, as those of all times have been, to require the utmost sedulity of the Clergy, and of all good Men, in lessening their enormity; and there is no mean of doing that with effect so probable, as that of paying a particular attention to the Education of Youth. "Young Children (says Ostervald) ought to be the chief care of Pastors; no part of their office is more useful, or rewards their labour with better success than that. Their endeavours to mend those who are come to age, are for the most part to little purpose, but what they do for Children is of great benefit. If therefore they have a zeal for the Glory of God, and if they wish to see a change in the

the face of the Church, let them apply themselves to the instructing of Youth, and make it their business to form a New Generation." The possibility of amending men's manners at any age should not be despaired of; and the fittest opportunities, such as those of Sickness and Affliction, of attempting the reformation, should be attended to and improved; yet the most enlarged prospect of doing good, consists in seasoning with wholesome Instruction the susceptible Minds of Young Persons.

I know not whether all of you may feel yourselves warmed with that zeal of doing good to those committed to your care, which I am earnest in recommending to you: It does not simply consist in performing with regularity the stated services of the Church in which you are appointed to minister, though that performance is undoubtedly a material part of it; but it extends further; it watches over the morals of every person, of every degree, age, and condition, within your cures, as a Father

a Father watches over the morals of his Children. The Task is difficult to perform: the ignorant are to be instructed, the vicious reclaimed, the obdurate softened, the proud humbled, the meek encouraged, the inconsiderate rendered thoughtful, and a serious sense of the important concerns of another world, and of the comparative nothingness of this, is to be engraven on the hearts of all. The seasons moreover for advice, admonition, instruction, are to be studiously observed; lest an improper exertion of our pastoral care, in any instance, should tend to confirm men in their errors, rather than to reform them. Above all, you are not to presume on any imaginary sanctity of your Order, abstractedly considered, as if it could of itself, without sanctity of manners and sufficiency in the knowledge of the Scriptures, give weight and dignity to your Labours. I know not, I say, whether all of you may feel yourselves animated with a due sense of the importance of the Office in which

you are engaged, and with a consequent zeal to discharge it as becometh the Servants of Jesus Christ; but if any of you, (and I principally address myself to the younger Part, as standing, I apprehend, more in need of my Instruction,) if any of you are conscious to yourselves that you are cold and languid in the discharge of your duty; that your minds are hankering after the amusements of the world; that you are more desirous of being distinguished as social companions, than as diligent Pastors; that you are ashamed of modestly supporting in Argument the religion you are authorized to teach, when you hear it ridiculed by persons of rank or fortune superior to your own; I would beg leave to give you a word of advice, adapted, I presume, to eradicate the very principle of the disorder from whence this indifference springs. My Advice is—that you apply your best ability in thoroughly examining the foundation on which your Christian Faith is built.—You will tell me, that this,

is an unnecessary task, that you believe the Christian Religion to be true.—I trust you have that belief—but there is a belief which is taken up without examination, on the credit and authority of others; and there is a belief which is the result of our own sober inquiry and critical investigation; and it is this latter sort of belief which I recommend to your Attainment, as the only one which can produce in you that kind of zeal which I wish you to be possessed of, which can make you become the *light of the World*, and the *salt of the Earth*. There is no zeal stronger than that of ignorance and fanaticism; but this is a morose, uncharitable zeal, extravagant in the sphere of its action, and sometimes profligate in its exertion. From this kind of zeal I hope you will always preserve yourselves. If it be not in our power every where to extinguish its flames, it should be our study not to suffer them to invade the Sanctuary. The Zeal which is founded in a thorough knowledge of the Scripture, in a rational

conviction that the Gospel is a Revelation from God, is that by which I wish you to be distinguished. This Principle being once fixed in your hearts, that you are the Ministers of a dispensation, which has God for its Author, and the Salvation of Man for its End, and being frequently reflected on by you, there can be no doubt that it will produce in you a suitable conduct; equally removed from that Lukewarmness which is the Offspring of an unsettled faith; and from those extravagant Flights of Devotion which originate in Hypocrisy or Mysticism, and usually terminate in Impiety or Insanity.

When you first apply your minds to the full investigation of the truth of the Christian Religion, I would not wish you to entangle yourselves in polemic Divinity, lest you should thereby be diverted from the great object of your pursuit—the establishing in yourselves a solid conviction that the Bible contains a Revelation of the Will of God. What particular

particular doctrines are therein revealed will very properly engage your future attention; but the first point is to understand the grounds on which you affirm,—That the Old and New Testament do indeed contain, not a cunningly-devised fable, but, the word of God—that they were written by the persons whose names they bear—that they are come down to us sufficiently free from interpolations and corruptions by party zealots—that their several authors had abundant means of knowing the truth of the facts which they narrate—that they had no inducements to falsify their accounts; nor any power of doing it, had they been so disposed.—I am very desirous that your inquiry into the truth of the history contained in the Bible, should precede your inquiry into the nature of the doctrines therein delivered; for when you are once convinced of the Authenticity of the sacred Code, you will be less perplexed by the difficulties which may attend the full comprehension of some of the doc-

trines contained in it, and you will be less scandalized at the jarring and discordant Interpretations which learned Men have given of particular passages. You will wisely say within yourselves—the great points—of a Redemption through the blood of Christ—of his Mediation with the eternal God in our behalf—of a Resurrection from the Dead—of a future Judgment—of an everlasting State of Rewards and Punishments—these are all clearly revealed in that Book of whose Authenticity I entertain no doubts; why then should I perplex myself with disputes, not concerning these great points themselves, but concerning their modes and circumstances? with disquisitions respecting subtleties, which human ability since the age of the Apostles has not been able to explain to general satisfaction; and which, if explained, could have little or no efficacy in meliorating my own heart, or in fitting me in the discharge of my pastoral functions for amending the hearts of other Men?

Whatever

Whatever opinion may be entertained, by serious and intelligent Inquirers into the meaning of Scripture Language concerning the Person of Christ, yet all must agree in this—That He is the *Seed of the Woman*, whose Office it was to bruise the Serpent's Head—That He is the *Seed of Abraham*, in whom all Nations of the Earth were to be blessed—That He is the *last Adam*, in whom all shall be made alive—That He is the *Son* whom the Father sent to be the Saviour of the World—That He is the *Lamb* that was slain, and redeemed us to God by his blood—That He is the *Advocate* who now liveth to make intercession for us—That He will be the *Judge*, who at the last day will reward every Man according to his Works—That He hath *the Keys of Hell and of Death—is become the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him*—possesseth *all power in Heaven and in Earth*.—All who acknowledge this unlimited Power of Jesus Christ, and receive Him as their Lord and King, seem, as

moral agents, to be under equal Obligations to obey him, though they may not all agree in Opinion, as to the mode of his possessing that Power.

But though I lay the greatest stress on your acquiring a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the Arguments by which the truth of Christianity is established, as thinking such kind of knowledge highly useful in generating in you a pure and stedfast zeal in the discharge of your pastoral duties; yet I must not be understood as if I thought that all was done, which ought to be done, when you have acquired that knowledge of which I have been speaking. Something more is required of you, if you would merit the character of learned Divines. It is not enough that you are convinced by direct proofs of the truth of the Gospel; you ought to be prepared to convince others, and expert in answering the numerous objections which Deistical writers have produced against Christianity. Many of these objections have more

subtlety

subtlety than solidity in them; some of them, however, are of real importance, and all of them have been displayed to the world with so much force and ingenuity by men of great, though we may perhaps be allowed to say perverted abilities, that they have done much mischief, in staggering the faith of many individuals, especially of individuals distinguished by their rank and opulence. Men of this Class, being elevated by their Education above the Vulgar, cannot help reasoning concerning their present state and their future expectations; but being, as all men are, too often allured from the rigid rule of Christian rectitude by the solicitation of Appetite or the Love of the World, they become willing Hearers of infidel Objections, wishing that religion to be false which they fear may be true. To these and all other unbelievers from whatever source, whether of depraved morality or mistaken argumentation, their infidelity may arise, it is your duty to be able to give a reason for the faith that

is in you; to answer their objections with convincing arguments, and to remove their difficulties with mildness and condescension, and all possible goodwill towards them.

After having recommended it to you to take great pains in convincing yourselves of the validity of the direct proofs of the truth of Christianity; and in furnishing yourselves with ready and sufficient answers to such objections as are commonly brought against it; you will allow me to say a word or two, still addressing myself principally to the younger Part of this Audience, on the manner in which you should teach others the doctrines which you yourselves have learned. My first piece of Advice is, That in your parochial preaching your Language be as plain as possible; it may be plain without being vulgar; persons of condition will not be disgusted at the unaffected simplicity of your style; if your matter is good, they will be edified by your preaching, notwithstanding the plainness

plainness of your Language; but meaner persons, how good soever your matter may be, cannot be edified by you, if they do not understand the terms in which you deliver it.—Another matter deserving your attention is—to divide your sermons into a few distinct heads. This mode was carried too far by the divines of the last century, and it has been too much neglected by our present divines: our Predecessors in the Ministry divided and subdivided their subject, till their hearers were confounded by the great variety of topicks recommended to their consideration; but without some division, a Sermon is like an Essay, which is forgotten by the generality, as soon as it is read; a congregation is amused by it, but not instructed.—A third point is—to ground all your exhortations to the performance of moral duties on their proper foundation,—obedience to the Will of God.—The Heathens were exhorted by their Philosophers to the Practice of Virtue from a contemplation of its innate Beauty,

of

of its fitness and utility; and in every civilized State mankind have been impelled to it also by the Operation of human Laws, and the censure of the World; but we Christians ought, on all occasions, to be moved to it, by the powerful threatenings and promises announced to mankind in the Gospel.—A fourth point is—not to narrow the foundations of faith; not to teach any doctrine as necessary to be believed, how true soever you may esteem it, which is not in Scripture expressly declared to be necessary. You may, otherwise, chance to be occupied in establishing your own Errors, when you fondly think yourselves engaged in contending *for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints.* Those who in former times burned their fellow Creatures—for refusing to worship the Cross—for denying Transubstantiation—for maintaining that the Pope was Antichrist—for not undertaking a Pilgrimage—for not confessing to a Priest—for saying that prayer to Creatures was Idolatry,

—thought,

—thought, undoubtedly, that they were *fighting the good fight of faith*; that, in burning Hereticks, they were burning the Tares which obstructed the growth of the good seed of Christianity. Yet, alas! in this their contention for the faith how were they mistaken! in this their holy warfare how did they war against humanity, scripture and truth! and how do we deplore the blindness, and execrate the fury, of their zeal. It is not the Church of *Rome* alone which has erred in this way; *Calvin* burned *Servetus*; *Cranmer* burned *van Paris*; and almost every page of Ecclesiastical History is polluted with the blood of men sacrificed on the altars of Bigotry and Intolerance. That is deemed Heresy in every Age and Country which is opposite to the doctrines of the Established Church. Protestantism was Heresy in Great Britain three centuries ago, and it is Heresy still in the greatest Part of Christendom. We have at present Oppugners of the Doctrines of the Establishment, and though they are not burned

for

for their belief, yet they are by some spoken of with disrespect, and tolerated with reluctance. This is a circumstance rather to be lamented than wondered at, when we consider the diversity of men's understandings, and affections, and the casual sources from which opinions are frequently derived at an early Age—*plerique primùm antè tenentur astricti, quàm quod esset optimum, judicare potuerunt: deinde infirmissimo tempore ætatis aut obsecuti amico cuidam, aut una alicujus, quem primùm audierunt, oratione capti de rebus incognitis judicant, et ad quamcunque sunt disciplinam quasi tempestate delati, ad eam tanquam ad saxum adhærescunt.*—Notwithstanding this, Literature and Philosophy have so enlightened and enlarged the minds of men, principally by shewing them the narrowness of the Limits of Human Understanding in every branch of Science, as well as in the investigation of the truths of natural and revealed Religion, that the present Church of England, we are confident, had she the Power, would be as far from treading

ing

ing in the sanguinary footsteps of the former Church of England, as the British Legislature would be now from granting her that Authority of doing it, which was so superstitiously conceded to her, in an Age of Ignorance, and ecclesiastical Domination.—The day, we trust, is not far distant, when a profession of Belief in the divine Mission of Jesus Christ as related in the authentic Records of the Bible, will be considered as a comprehensive Bond of Charity, fitted to unite (which is the main thing) in mutual forbearance and goodwill at least, if not in community of Worship, all denominations of Christians.—Be this as it may; nice distinctions of doctrines, and subtle inferences of great apparent Importance, from detached Texts of disputed Authenticity, or dubious Interpretation, should never find their way into the Pulpit. I am far from wishing to stifle the discussion of disputable doctrines; on the contrary, full and free investigation seems to me to be the only mean of rendering them not disputable; but both the attack

attack and the defence of them, are most properly committed to those Champions of our Faith, who find themselves disposed to exhibit proofs of their Theological Prowess, on the Amphitheatre of public Controversy—the Press; or on that of liberal and learned Disputation—the Schools of the Universities.

Lastly and especially it is to be remembered by you, that as the Lives of the Primitive Christians were the best Apology which they could make to their Pagan Persecutors for the truth of their Religion; so will the Sobriety, the Chastity, the Purity, the Peaceableness of your Lives, be the most persuasive Sermons which you can preach to your respective Parishioners. I am far from wishing you to put on such an Austerity of Manners as should separate you from Society; by mixing with the world you may chance to mend it, to hinder it at least from growing worse. The Clergy need not debar themselves the pleasure of attending even public places of Amusement; yet they should neither

neither be amongst the foremost in promoting their establishment, nor amongst the first in going to them, nor amongst the last in leaving them. The Clergy need not be sordid and negligent in their dress; yet it does not become them to be so curious about it, as to appear ashamed of that Garb which distinguishes them from the Laity, and which when not dishonoured by an immoral life never fails to procure respect to the Wearer from all ranks and conditions of men. The Clergy need not, on every occasion, interrupt the festivity of private companies by improper remonstrances; but they ought not on any occasion to give countenance to Ribaldry, Calumny, Impiety, or Obscenity, by joining in the conversation. They ought, even out of respect to their temporal Interests, to be perfectly aware, that by a loose conduct they do not recommend themselves to men of rank or fortune be their Characters what they may. Men of sense and of a serious turn of mind will ever think and speak of them with extreme

contempt; and men of loose morals, who are debauched and profane themselves, detest debauchery and profaneness in the Clergy.

Quem damnosa Venus, quem præceps alea nudat;
Gloria quem supra vires et vestit, et ungit;
Quem tenet argenti sitis importuna famesque,
Quem paupertatis pudor et fuga; dives amicus,
Sæpe decem vitiis instructior, odit et horret.

If this observation be true, as it certainly is, concerning the manner in which every vicious person, in ordinary life, is considered by his rich and powerful acquaintance; how infinitely more true is it, when that Person happens to be a Clergyman?

I have trespassed much on your patience: two circumstances remain to be mentioned, and I flatter myself the mention of them both will give you pleasure. The Welsh Bishops, understanding that many Churches in this Principality were imperfectly, or improperly supplied with Bibles in the Welsh Tongue, have undertaken to apply a remedy to the Evil, by promoting a new

Edition

Edition of the Folio Welsh Bible, which was printed in 1690. This Diocese has had the honour of furnishing the Copy from which the new Edition is to be printed; the undertaking is now carrying on at *Oxford*, and will be completed with all convenient speed. The other circumstance, respects Stipendiary Curates: a Bill has passed both Houses of Parliament, and is now ready for, if it has not received the Royal Assent; by which after the twenty-fourth day of this month, all Licenses by which Curates shall be appointed to serve their respective Cures are to be exempted from the stamp duties. The preamble of the Bill recites the several Acts of Parliament by which stamp duties were imposed, and the enacting part is thus expressed—" And whereas the said several Duties have been found very inconvenient and burthensome to stipendiary Curates appointed by License to perform the Office of Curate in a Parish Church upon the Nomination of the Rector or Vicar thereof, Be it therefore enacted by

the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the twenty-fourth day of June one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, every such License so appointing any stipendiary Curate, in which the annual Amount of the Stipend shall be inserted, that shall pass the Seal of any Archbishop, Bishop, Chancellor, or other Ordinary, or any ecclesiastical Court whatsoever, shall be and the same is hereby declared to be freed and exempted from any of the said hereinbefore recited Stamp Duties; and such License shall be available and given in Evidence in any Court of Law or Equity, any Law or Statute to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding."

The intention, it may be presumed, of the Legislature in passing this Act is, that (the chief obstacle which had attended the licensing of Curates being removed)

no Curate in future should be allowed to officiate in any Diocese without being licensed. My desire is to fulfil the intention of the Legislature, and I therefore now express a wish, and that I hope will be sufficient, that such Curates as are not licensed in this Diocese, will procure proper Nominations from their respective Rectors and Vicars, and Testimonials of their good conduct, and apply for Licenses as soon as they conveniently can.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN 1795.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN

1795.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE pleasure which I experience in meeting you on such occasions as the present, is always accompanied with some degree of anxiety. I am fearful, lest I should have nothing to produce to you worthy your attention, as scholars, and divines; and I think too well of your general good conduct, in the discharge of your parochial duties, to employ the time in reprehending you for faults, which, probably, do not exist; or in cautioning you against errors, to which you probably are not prone.

On a former occasion I took the liberty of giving you my advice, on the necessity of

of your thoroughly examining the foundation on which your faith, as Christians, is built; and I, at this time, repeat the advice with great earnestness and sincerity. An attack has been openly made in a foreign country, and is secretly carrying on in our own; not on modes of worship, or church discipline; not on disputable articles of faith; not on any of the outworks of Christianity; but on the citadel itself. We know indeed, that this citadel is founded on a Rock, which no human force can subvert; yet we are placed in it as sentinels, to detect the artifice of those who covertly undermine, and to repel the aggression of those who openly assail it; and we know the punishment which awaits soldiers sleeping on their post.

There have been men in former ages, and there are not a few in our own, who think and speak of the Clergy, as destitute either of understanding, or honesty; who represent them as interested in the support of a superstition; and ready, at all times, to sacrifice their probity as men, on the altar

altar of professional hypocrisy; who stigmatize them as the protectors of ignorance, and the persecutors of science. A philosopher, says *Helvetius*, has for his enemies, the Bonzees, the Dervises, the Bramins, the ministers of every religion in the world. Let us forgive these philosophers, whether foreign or domestic, this wrong; but let us, at the same time, beg them to consider —that we, as well as they, are subjects of a free state, in which the road to wealth and distinction is open to every man of ability; and more open, perhaps, to men of ability in other professions, than in that of the church—that we, as well as they, enjoy talents from the gift of God, and have been as sedulous as themselves, (speaking without arrogance) in the improvement of them. Are they mathematicians, natural philosophers, metaphysicians, logicians, classical scholars? so are we.—I speak not of individuals, much less of myself, but of the great body of the British clergy. There is not a single branch of knowledge, in which the clergy are not

equal,

equal, at least, to those who injuriously impute to them the grossness of ignorance in believing an imposture, or the more degrading and flagitious infamy of supporting what they do not believe.

It is true, that lawyers, physicians, soldiers, men in every profession, are wont to acquire a partiality for that in which they have been educated; and by the almost irresistible force of habit, think more highly of it's excellencies, and are disposed to defend it's defects with more pertinacity, than reason will allow. If a prepossession of this kind should be observable in the professors of Christianity, or in the advocates for any particular system of Christianity, a candid mind would be ready rather to apologize for the infirmity, than to condemn it, as springing from a corrupted source of interest or ambition. What interest can an Unitarian or an Arian have in dissenting from the faith esteemed orthodox? If either, or both of them are in an error, may the mercy of God forgive them! but let not the

the unmerciful judgment of man condemn them.—What interest can a deist of upright morals (and there are many such) have in contending, that the Supreme Being gave no law to Moses, no revelation of his will to mankind by Jesus Christ; but that Moses and the prophets, that Jesus and the apostles were like Confucius, Zoroaster, Numa, Mahomet, and their several associates; that they pretended to a divine authority, which was not vouchsafed to them? We believe, that the divine missions of Moses and of Jesus may be established, and that they have been repeatedly established, by arguments, which are utterly inapplicable to every other religion which hath taken place among mankind; but we do not take upon us to anathematize, with fiery zeal, every one who does not believe as we do; we pray for his conversion to what we esteem the truth, and we request him to admit, that the sincerity of our belief in Christianity is as great as that of his unbelief; if he thinks otherwise of us, he thinks amiss;

amiss; if he speaks otherwise, he becomes a calumniator.

This moderation, which, on all occasions, I recommend as proper for us to observe towards those who differ from us, either partially, or wholly, and which, in return, we have a right to expect from them, is not to be interpreted into an indifference either towards Christianity in general, or towards that particular mode of it which is established in these kingdoms. The church of England may be maintained, and it is our duty to maintain it, with zeal regulated by charity, against all it's enemies, till they have convinced us, that a less defective system of doctrine, worship, and discipline, might be peaceably introduced in it's stead; and this, if we may judge from what we have read of former times, or observed of our own, the opposers of the establishment will not be able speedily to accomplish.

He who wishes to repair an ancient fortress, when he sees it attacked by a thousand enemies, disfigured by the rubbish of

of a thousand ages, cannot, without great injustice, be ranked with those who labour to overturn it.

Nor is the defence of the Christian Religion abandoned, when we allow unbelievers the full liberty of producing all the arguments they can in support of their infidelity. Our liberality in this respect proceeds not from any supineness, or inattention towards what we esteem of inestimable value, but from a total dislike of dogmatism, and intolerance;—principles ill comporting with the weakness of human understanding, and with the benignity of the Christian religion; and from a strong persuasion, that the result of the most critical scrutiny into the foundations of our faith will be a confirmation of it's truth. The time I think is approaching, or is already come, when Christianity will undergo a more severe investigation than it has ever yet done. My expectation, as to the issue, is this—that catholic countries will become protestant, and that protestant countries will admit a farther

reformation.

reformation.—In expressing this expectation, which I am far from having the vanity to propose with oracular confidence, I may possibly incur the censure of some, who think that protestantism, as established in Germany, in Switzerland, in Scotland, in England, is, in all these, and in other countries, so perfect a system of christianity, that it is incapable of any amendment in any of them. If this should be the case, I must console myself with reflecting, that the greatest men could not, in their day, escape unmerited calumny. Every age has had it's Sacheverells, it's Hickes's, and it's Chenells; who, with the bitterness of theological odium, sharpened by party rancour, have not scrupled to break the bonds of christian charity. Hoadley was called a dissenter, Chillingworth a Socinian, and Tillotson both Socinian and atheist; and all of them experienced this obloquy, from contemporary zealots, on account of the liberality of their sentiments, on account of their endeavouring to render Christianity more rational than it was in certain

certain points generally esteemed to be. I had certainly rather submit to imputations, which even these great men could not avoid, than be celebrated as the mightiest champion of the church on the system of intolerance, or the most orthodox contender for the faith on the system of those who maintain, that our first reformers have left us no room for improvement in scriptural learning. With whatever assurance other men may be persuaded, that they have attained certain knowledge of the truth of all christian doctrines; with whatever zeal, in consequence of that persuasion, they may foster the seeds of persecution; I confess that there are many points in theology on which I feel myself disposed to adopt an expression of Saint Austin, when he is stating the different ways, in which he conjectures that original sin may have been propagated from parents to children—*quid autem horum sit verum libentius disco, quam dico, ne audeam docere quod nescio.*

Herodotus tells us, that *Darius* asked

some of the Greeks, what sum of money he should give them to eat the bodies of their deceased parents, after the manner of the Indians. Upon their refusal to comply on any consideration, he asked some of the Indians, who were accustomed to eat the bodies of their parents, what sum they would take to burn the bodies of their parents after the Grecian manner: but they, setting up a general outcry, desired the king to have better thoughts of them. Thus it is in religion; every man is attached to the mode of worship, and the system of doctrines, to which he has been accustomed, and he looks upon other modes, and other doctrines, as bordering on impiety. This disposition is so general, that it may be considered as natural; yet, like many other natural propensities, it may be corrected; it is an evil which may be overcome by good sense. I call it an evil, because it misleads the judgment, and subjects men to the tyranny of prejudice. It was a prejudice of this sort which made St. Paul a

persecutor of Jesus; which made the Jews persecutors of the Christians; which made the heathens persecutors of both Jews and Christians; and which has, at times, rendered the different denominations of Christians in this country, and in all other parts of Christendom, persecutors of each other. There can be no question that it is the duty of all men to oppose reason to prejudice. But, unluckily, every man thinks that he does so; he mistakes his own conclusions for truths, which ought not to be disputed, and which cannot be illustrated; and every argument tending to subvert them is rejected without examination. This perversion of the understanding is a great reproach to men of education and learning. We may lament it and excuse it in the bulk of mankind, who, letting their reason lie without exercise, go, on most occasions, in matters of opinion, not in the way in which they ought to go, but in that which they have gone before. But in men habituated to the cultivation of their

faculties, and to impartial investigation in other branches of knowledge, this prepossession in religion, the most important of all branches, is wholly reprehensible.

The great disputes, which at present agitate Europe, respect the first principle of natural religion, and the truth of all revealed religion. The first principle of natural religion is—the existence of a God, the maker, the preserver, and the moral governor, of the universe. No created Being can comprehend the essence of the divine nature, much less is it in the power of Man to do it; but to deny the existence of a God, is such a degree of insanity, as few men in any age have fallen into; and those who have fallen into it, have been deservedly looked upon as dangerous prodigies in nature.

Protagoras, a philosopher of antiquity, we are told by *Cicero*, began a work with saying—"Whether there are Gods, or whether there are none, I have nothing certain to deliver on the subject." The Athenians, fired with indignation at this daring

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daring declaration of the sophist's scepticism, banished him from their city and territory, and burned his book before a public assembly of the people. In our days, a philosopher has been heard to exclaim, in a solemn convention of his countrymen, "I am an atheist." Far from resenting this public avowal of his impiety, his countrymen called out, "What is that to us? you are an honest man." I do not deny the possibility of an atheist being an honest man—*Spinoza* is said to have been one—and I am an enemy to every degree of persecution for opinion; but surely the people of Athens manifested, on a similar occasion, not only more piety, but infinitely more political wisdom, than the people of Paris—for there has yet been no instance in the world, of a state subsisting without religion.

I think it unnecessary to enter into any laboured proof of the Being and Providence of God, before this audience; it is known, I presume, to every one of you, my Brethren, that the existence of

a Supreme Being may be established from three different sources of argumentation—from a metaphysical consideration of the absurdity of an infinite series of dependent beings—from the contemplation of the order and beauty of the universe—and from the consent of all nations; which consent has been derived by tradition from our first parents. Many writers, ancient and modern, have maintained, that the idea of God was implanted in our nature; they were driven to this expedient, which Mr. Locke has shewn to have no foundation, from their not having been able otherwise to account for that universal consent, which prevailed not amongst the learned only, but amongst the unlearned part of mankind, concerning the Being of a God. Had they been acquainted with, or properly considered, the writings of *Moses*, they would have seen the great facility with which a knowledge of the creation, and of the existence of God, might have been disseminated throughout the world, by

the descendants of *Noah*. All mankind are sprung from a common stock, and all have retained, as might have been expected, some knowledge of the cause of their common origin. There was a time when I was fond of metaphysical inquiries into the nature of the Supreme Being, and much delighted with the works of *Cudworth*, *King*, *Clarke*, *Leibnitz*, and other acute reasoners on the subject; but I have long thought that the motions of the heavenly bodies, the propagation and growth of animals and plants, the faculties of the human mind, and even the ability of moving my hand up or down, by a simple volition, afford, when deliberately reflected on, more convincing arguments against atheism, than all the recondite lucubrations of the most profound philosophers. In a word, the argument for the existence of God, which is drawn from the contemplation of nature, is so clear and so strong, that the most ignorant can comprehend it, and the most learned cannot invent a better. This

argument is so obvious to a thinking mind, that I suspect the accuracy of *Cicero*'s information, when he tells us that *Anaxagoras* was the first, who taught that the universe was formed by an Intelligent Mind, distinct from matter. He himself, indeed, gives reason for this suspicion, when he observes, that *Thales*, the predecessor of *Anaxagoras*, maintained (probably from some tradition concerning the creation) that God was that mind which formed all things out of water. I will conclude this head with a passage from *Chardin*'s Travels into *Persia*, as cited by *Fabricius*; it may be better remembered, as an argument against atheism, than a more acute disquisition would be.

The Mahometans, says this author, have invented many fabulous accounts concerning the prophets and the patriarchs of the Old Testament; amongst the rest, they tell us—that *Moses* having preached a long time to king Pharaoh, who was an atheist and a tyrant, on the existence of one eternal God, and on the creation of the

the world; and finding that he made no impression either upon Pharaoh or his courtiers; ordered a fine palace to be erected privately, at a considerable distance from a country residence of the king. It happened that the king, as he was a hunting, saw this palace, and inquired by whom it had been built. None of his followers could give him any information; at length Moses came forward, and said to him—that the palace must certainly have built itself. The king fell a laughing at his absurdity, telling him that it was a pretty thing, for a man who called himself a prophet, to say that such a palace had built itself in the middle of a desert. Moses interrupted him with saying, "You think it a strange extravagance to affirm that this palace built itself, the thing being impossible; and yet you believe that the world made itself. If this fine palace, which is but an atom in comparison, could not spring from itself in this desert, how much more impossible is it that this world, so solid, so great, so

admirable

admirable in all it's parts, could be made by itself, and that it should not, on the contrary, be the work of an Architect wise and powerful!" The king was convinced, and worshipped God, as Moses had instructed him to do. There is much good sense in this fable, and it's substance is thus expressed by *Cicero—quod si mundum efficere potest concursus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non potest?*

When we speak concerning the truth of revealed religion, we include not only the certainty of the divine missions of Moses and of Jesus, but the nature of the several doctrines promulgated by them to mankind. Now you may ask me, what these doctrines are? I know what they are to me; but, pretending to no degree of infallibility, I think it safer to tell you where they are contained, than what they are. They are contained in the Bible; and if, in the reading of that book, your sentiments concerning the doctrines of Christianity should be different from those

of

of your neighbour, or from those of the church, be persuaded on your part, that infallibility appertains as little to you, as it does to the church of which you are a member, or to any individual who differs from you. Towards the church you ought to preserve reverence and respect; and in your public teaching, you ought not, whilst you continue a minister in it, to disturb the public peace, by opposition to it's doctrines; and towards individuals, of whatever denomination of Christians they may be, who differ from you, you ought to preserve charity of thought, and courtesy of conduct; and if you do this, your discordance of opinion will be attended with no mischief public or private.

Many learned men have bestowed much useless labour in defining, what are the fundamental verities of the Christian religion; useless I esteem it, because the same things are not fundamental to all men, and there is no infallible judge of controversy to settle the disputes which may arise. A papist believes the doctrine

of

of transubstantiation, of worshipping of images, of invocation of saints, of purgatory, of the insalvability (if the word may be admitted) of heretics, and of the infallibility of popes, councils, and churches, to be fundamental doctrines:—a protestant does not believe any of these doctrines to be fundamental. Protestants differ from each other in their sentiments concerning the eucharist, concerning the trinity, concerning satisfaction, original sin, and personal predestination;—but the wisest amongst them do not esteem any particular opinion concerning any of these points, to be so fundamentally right, that salvation will not belong to those who think otherwise.

Personal predestination appears to many to be a doctrine full of impiety and despair. They think it impious, as it represents God to be a blind or malignant Being—blind, if he dooms a man to eternal destruction without knowing whether he will do good or evil; and malignant, if knowing he makes no distinction, in his decrees,

decrees, between them who obey and them who disobey him. They think it a doctrine pregnant with despair—for now to be persuaded that you are inevitably doomed to everlasting punishment, that no future rectitude of conduct, no penitence for what is past, no supplication, no intercession, nothing which can be done by yourself, or by any other for you, can in the least avail to the altering of your fate; what is this, say they, but to overwhelm the soul with the blackness of despondent horror? Is it not, they ask, a more impious doctrine than that of Epicurus? for that represented God as not troubling himself in the government of the world, as making no distinction between the righteous and the wicked, as suffering both to die and become extinct; but this represents him, as consigning to everlasting torments, those whom he had from all eternity determined to condemn. This doctrine, which Saint *Chrysostom* amongst the ancients, and *Arminius* amongst the moderns, reprobated as unworthy

unworthy of God, has been zealously maintained by *Calvin* and St. *Austin*. In my humble judgment, they have done great service to Christianity, who have endeavoured to shew that it is not founded in Scripture. For nothing has contributed more to the propagation of deism, than the making doctrines abhorrent from reason, parts of the Christian system. There may be doctrines above reason; but nothing, which is evidently contrary to reason, can ever be justly considered as a part of the Christian dispensation.—I will instance in another point.

A deist stumbles at the very threshold of religion, and turns with scorn and terror from the temple of God, when he is told that he cannot enter into it but through the gate of original sin, as described by *Fulgentius*, the disciple of St. *Austin*. He admits original sin in a certain sense, acknowledging that it is not contrary to reason, that the whole human race should, from the transgression of Adam, become subject to labour, disease, and death; but he

he bids us combine into one idea whatever we have read of the Manichean doctrine concerning an evil principle, of the sanguinary tenets of the worshippers of Moloch, of the cruel superstitions of paganism in every age and country; and he defies us to form any thing so hideous to imagination, so repugnant to reason, so destructive of every just notion of a Supreme Being, as the doctrine of an orthodox father of the christian church, concerning original sin. The doctrine, in the words of Fulgentius, stands thus—*firmissime tene, et nullatenus dubites, parvulos, sive in uteris matrum vivere incipiunt et ibi moriuntur, sive cum de matribus nati sine sacramento sancti baptismatis de hoc seculo transeunt, ignis æterni sempiterno supplicio puniendos.* —Parent of universal good! merciful Father of the human race! how hath the benignity of thy nature been misrepresented! how hath the Gospel of thy Son been misinterpreted by the burning zeal of presumptuous man! I mean not, on this occasion, to enter into the various questions

questions which learned men have too minutely discussed, concerning the lapse of our first parents, the original rectitude, and subsequent depravation of human nature; I simply mean to say, that a proposition which asserts, that infants dying in the womb will be tormented in everlasting fire, on account of Adam's transgression, is a proposition so entirely subversive of all our natural notions of the justice and mercy of the Supreme Being, that it cannot be admitted, unless a passage in Scripture could be produced, in which it is clearly, and in so many words revealed; and I am certain that no such passage can be produced.

The Gospel was preached to the poor, to ignorant and unlearned men; it's leading doctrines concerning providence, a resurrection from the dead, and a future state of retribution, are so obvious, that no one who can read the Scriptures can fail to see them. Can it be a matter of surprise then, that a reluctance is felt against the admission of abstruse doctrines, which

which require the subtlety of argute logic, and scholastic disquisition, to discover and enforce them? When men are desirous of forming systems, they are apt to collect together a number of texts, which, being taken as abstract propositions, seem to establish the point; but which, when interpreted by the context, appear to have no relation to it. There is no greater source of error than this practice; it has prevailed in the Christian Church from the earliest ages, and it still prevails. We owe to it the corruptions of Popery, and that infinity of heresies, which have so much debased the simplicity of gospel-truth, and driven so many men of sense from embracing Christianity. I am far from considering unbelievers as devoid of ability, or of integrity. I think they have not given the subject an unprejudiced and serious examination; and that the principal matters to which they object are the doctrines of men, rather than the commands of God. Every one who will well weigh the subject, must perceive

the unfairness with which men usually proceed, in forming systems in theology. By stringing together detached sentences, an *Ausonius* may compel the chaste *Virgil* to furnish materials for an indecent poem; and, from the Bible itself, a system of impiety might, by such means, be extracted.

But there is no doctrine of our holy religion, which has given greater offence to unbelievers, or occasioned greater perplexity to sincere Christians, than the doctrine of Satisfaction. Why might not God have restored human kind to the immortality which was lost by the transgression of Adam, without requiring any atonement, satisfaction, or price of redemption? Can the benevolent Author of the universe be induced, by the death of an innocent being, to bestow a blessing on mankind, which, without such a sacrifice, he would have withheld from them? Does God Almighty, like the demons of pagan superstition, delight in blood?—These, and innumerable other

questions such as these, obtrude themselves on the reluctant minds of pious and thinking men; and they are the rocks on which impious and unthinking men make shipwreck of their faith. There is one general answer which may be given to them all; and it is an answer in which intelligent and sober men will acquiesce —our incapacity to comprehend the ways of the Almighty.—What mortal knoweth for what we are reserved in another world? Who can describe the means requisite for exalting our present human nature to that degree of angelic excellence, without which it may not be possible for us to participate in the joys of heaven? Who hath such an insight into the past, present, and future dispensations of God —into the relation which this state bears to a future one—into the connection which the human race may *now* have, though unknown to us, or may hereafter have, though it hath not now, with other orders of beings, as positively to pronounce, that the blood of Christ was not

requisite to remove from mankind the consequences of Adam's transgression? We know assuredly, that God delighteth not in blood; that he hath no cruelty, no vengeance, no malignity, no infirmity of any passion, in his nature; but we do not know, whether the requisition of an atonement for transgression, may not be an *emanation of his infinite mercy*, rather than a *demand of his infinite justice.* We do not know, whether it may not be the very best means of preserving the innocence and happiness, not only of us, but of all other free and intelligent beings. We do not know, whether the suffering of an innocent person may not be productive of a degree of good, infinitely surpassing the evil of such sufferance; nor whether such a *quantum* of good could by any other mean have been produced. The death of Christ was voluntary; he laid down his own life, that he might give life to all mankind. This, no doubt, was a great instance of his love, and is a great motive for our gratitude,

gratitude, and ought to be a great incentive to holiness of life, since transgression was expiated by so great a sacrifice. But was God cruel, unmerciful, unjust in accepting this voluntary suffering of Christ as an instrument of our salvation? No, certainly; this must not be admitted, unless it could be shewn, which never can be shewn, that our salvation could have been accomplished, and to the same extent, by other less valuable means—unless it could be shewn, which never can be shewn, that more evil than good, either to Christ himself, to the human race, or to some other part of God's creation, has flowed from the death of Christ. I like not that arrogant theology, which presumes to explore what *angels desire to look into*, and which failing in it's attempt, rejects as absurd what it is not able to understand.

If God thought fit to accept for our redemption any price, there is nothing, that we know of, but his own wisdom which could determine what price he

would accept. Hence I see no difficulty in admitting, that the death of an angel, or of a mere man, might have been the price which God fixed upon. The *Socinians* contend, that Christ was a man, who had no existence before he was born of Mary; but they seem to me not to draw a just consequence, when from thence they infer, that an atonement could not have been made for the sins of mankind by the death of Jesus. The *Arians* maintain, that Jesus had an existence before he was born of Mary; and there is no reason for thinking, that the death of such a being might not have made an atonement for the sins of mankind. All depends on the appointment of God; and if, instead of the death of a super-angelic, of an angelic, or of an human being, God had fixed upon any other instrument, as a medium of restoring man to immortality, it would have been highly improper in us to have quarrelled with the mean which his goodness had appointed, merely because we could not see

see how it was fitted to attain the end. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:—he sent him into the world to be a propitiation for our sins*; and it is our duty to believe that the death of Christ was the fittest *ransom* which could have been provided for our *redemption*, though we may not be able, from our great ignorance, fully to comprehend it's peculiar expediency.

With great humility, and self-abasement, does it become us to think and speak of every dispensation of God; we cannot fathom the depth of his councils, we cannot reach the sublimity of his designs, we cannot apprehend the wisdom of the means by which he worketh out the happiness of the universe. In fine, my Brethren, it is our duty freely to examine the meaning of the words in which God has revealed his will, lest we should be led, by the authority of men, to adopt superstitious opinions as divine

truths; but it is not consistent with good sense to reject every thing which we cannot comprehend; the extent of our intellectual capacity is extremely circumscribed, and we fall into a dangerous delusion, when we affect to make it commensurate with the wisdom of the Almighty; *thinking ourselves to be something, when* in fact *we are nothing, we deceive ourselves,* and lead others into error.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN JUNE 1798.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.

BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Charge may be considered as, in some respects, a Supplement to my late Address to the People of Great Britain, though it was not written with any view to its publication. The request of the Clergy of my Diocese, repeatedly preferred to me during the course of my Visitation, and that of the Magistrates of the County of Monmouth, since conveyed to me in the subjoined Order of the Court of Quarter Sessions, have induced me to offer it to the Public.

Calgarth Park,
Aug. 29, 1798.

Copy of an Order of the Court of Quarter Sessions for the County of Monmouth; transmitted to me by Sir Robert Salusbury, the Chairman.

AT a General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, held at Usk, in the County of Monmouth, before Sir Robert Salusbury, Baronet; Thomas Evans, William Jenkins, William Harrison, Samuel Rosser, Thomas Hooper, John Kemeys, Gardner Kemeys, Fowler Walker, Richard Lewis, William Phillips, Esquires; and Francis Davies, and John Williams, Clerks;

ORDERED,

That application be made, by the Chairman, to the Lord Bishop of Landaff, requesting his Lordship to publish his excellent Charge to his Clergy on his last Visitation; that the Magistrates may have an opportunity of distributing it in their respective neighbourhoods, as the best Lesson against imbibing the delusive Principles of French Liberty; convinced as they are that its publication, at this particular conjuncture, will have a good effect in every county, as well as this.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN JUNE 1798.

REVERENDBRETHREN,

I HAD once determined to put off this Visitation to another year; but, on second thoughts, it appeared to me not wholly to be consistent with the duty I owe to my Clergy and to my Diocese, to desert them both in this time of general apprehension and impending danger. My presence, indeed, may be of little use on this occasion; but as, in private life, the appearance and consolation of friends inspire men with fortitude to sustain their misfortunes; so, in public difficulties, the zeal and attention of men in public stations have frequently a beneficial tendency to expel the

the demon of despondency from the minds of the timid, and to animate all ranks to a suitable exertion of their wisdom, their courage, and their patriotism.

At no period since I have been your Diocesan, have I interfered with your political opinions, or shewn the least anxiety to direct them to the support of any particular party in the State. Had I followed a contrary conduct, I should have acted in a manner unbecoming the nature of my office; ill suited to the character I wish to maintain; and disrespectful to yourselves. I have unquestionably my political principles, as well as other men have theirs: and, how unfashionable soever they may have become, I have never scrupled, and never shall scruple, to confess that those on which the Revolution was founded, and the present reigning Family seated on the Throne of these kingdoms, are, in my judgment, principles best calculated to protect the liberty and property of the subject, and to secure the honour and happiness

happiness of the Sovereign. But, wishing every man to use the same freedom of thinking and judging for himself which I have used through life, I feel no dislike to any one for thinking differently from me, nor have I any propensity to proselyte others to my sentiments. Indeed all prejudices and predilections with respect to particular men, all petty differences of political opinions, ought not, in the present situation of the country, to be so much as mentioned. For the Question is not now, as it has usually been, whether this or that man shall be the Minister of the Crown; but whether we shall have a Government to be administered? —Not, whether the Ministers or their opponents are the wisest and most disinterested Statesmen; but whether both parties are not infinitely wiser, and more disinterested, and fitter to serve the Country, than the self-erected Committee of England, associated with a French Directory?—The Question is not now, as it was in the Rebellions of fifteen and

and forty-five, whether we shall have a Monarch of the House of Brunswick, or of the House of Stuart; but whether we shall have any Monarch at all?—The Question is not now, as it was in the great Rebellion, whether the Church of England shall be governed by Presbyters, or by Bishops; but whether we shall any longer have a Church of any kind?—If, at such a time, I trouble you with a few reflections, political as well as religious, I trust that I am acting in a manner perfectly agreeable to the nature of my connection with you, and in no degree repugnant to your inclination.

The strength and stability of all Governments have much dependence on the opinions of those who are governed. Now the opinions of men, with respect to the Constitution of Great Britain, may, I judge, be classed under three distinct heads.—The first, is that of those, who think that every thing is so well arranged, that nothing can be altered for the better—The second, is that of those, who

who are apprehensive, that without a Reform of Parliament, the Government of the Country will be insensibly changed from a limited, to an absolute Monarchy—The third, is that of those, who esteem the Constitution to be so vitiated by corruption, that it cannot be amended, and that it ought to be changed into a Republic. Both the first and the last of these opinions are quite opposite to my sentiments. I think the Constitution, with all its real or imaginary defects, to be greatly preferable to any Republic that ever was established, either in ancient or modern times; and I think, notwithstanding this acknowledged preference, that some things might be altered for the better, both in Church and State. But though I neither think the Constitution so excellent that it cannot be amended, nor so vitiated that it ought to be changed into a Republic, yet I do not so far adopt the second opinion, as to esteem it liable to no difficulty in the execution. I at least must be allowed

to profess for myself, that I have not yet seen any Plan of Parliamentary Reform produced either by the Minister, or by his opponents, which, in my humble judgment, went to the root of the malady; and, unless the Reform reaches the root of the evil, the disease will be more tolerable than the remedy. I have conversed with many persons, both in and out of Parliament, who were zealous in their different ways of thinking, and stiff enough in opinion, but who had no clear ideas on the subject of Parliamentary Reform: they confounded two things essentially distinct from each other—The Reform of the Representation is one thing; the Reform of Parliament is another—between these there may be an accidental, but there is no necessary, connexion. Though the Right of Suffrage should be granted, not merely to a few Denizens, as was done at *Athens*, *Sparta*, and *Rome*, to the exclusion of nineteen twentieths of the whole inhabitants; not merely to about three-fourths of the

whole

whole people, as is now done in *America*; but though this right should be made universal, and the elective franchise should be extended as far as the wildest imagination can desire, and much farther than any political experience can justify, yet the persons elected would still be liable to corruption. On the other hand, if the number of electors were ten times as small as it is at present, yet might the persons elected become, from an high sense of honourable reputation, and public duty, superior to corruption. Nothing is wanted but a Parliament, in which every individual would decide on the concerns of the nation with as much impartiality and information, as a Juror decides in a Court of Justice, on the concerns of his neighbour; and this impartiality, this integrity of judgment, has a closer connexion with other principles, as its cause, than with a Reform in the Representation. And of all the causes conducive to this end, which might be mentioned, I know of none more operative,

than a conviction, that public conduct is not a matter of party, but of duty: religious principles, when properly improved, can alone resist more powerfully than they seem to do at present, or than they have ever done, in our own or in other countries, the attacks of individual avarice and ambition.

But, though a better plan of Parliamentary Reform could be brought forward than any which I have hitherto heard of, yet must I be of opinion, that no plan ought to be attempted, or adopted, in the present crisis of the fate of the nation. When the contagion of French Principles shall have been corrected by an experience of the mischief attending them; when the audacity of French ambition shall have been checked by the courage of this country; when peace shall be restored, and Europe shall be tranquillized; then, perhaps, but certainly not till then, ought the Question of Reform to be agitated by the Legislature of the Kingdom. I say by the Legislature of the Kingdom,—for, whenever

ever it shall be discussed, I hope it will be weighed with impartial and comprehensive wisdom, by those who are capable of discerning its utility or inexpediency, and not decided by clamorous meetings of ill-informed or ill-designing men.

Leaving the subject of Parliamentary Reform to the future deliberation of the wisest and the best men in the Kingdom; suffer me to advert to that spirit of turbulence, and disaffection towards the Government of the Country, of envy and disrespect towards their superiors in society, of desperate unconcern as to their future state, and of hardened impiety towards their Maker, which has unhappily possessed certain individuals in many parts of the Kingdom. I have no reason to believe that this description of persons is numerous in any county; and should be happy if I could persuade myself that they were less frequently met with in this Diocese, than in any other equal portion of the country. You are better judges than I can be, whether this is the fact; but, whe-

ther it be so or not, enow of them, I fear, will be found in your several parishes, to require your pastoral care in bringing them to a right understanding. Some of them may be ignorant of the nature of Government; of the origin of property; of the necessity of subordination; from never having duly considered these matters: others may have been misled by bad men: others may be stupid through vice, and prepared, by their profligacy, to help forward every scheme tending to public ruin; from an absurd hope, from a wicked expectation, of bettering their condition in the general confusion. You will vary your admonitions and instructions according to the nature of the case, which shall require your attention; always remembering, that the mind of man yields to kindness and courtesy, to gentle language and sound argument, but that its prejudices are confirmed by severity of expostulation, and harshness of rebuke. You will not, I think, be guilty of a breach of Christian Charity in the use of even harsh language,

when

when you explain to them the cruelties which the French have used in every country which they have invaded; for no language can reach the atrocity of the fact. They every where promise protection to the poorer sort, and they every where strip the poorest of every thing they possess; they plunder their cottages, and they set them on fire when the plunder is exhausted; they torture the owners to discover their wealth, and they put them to death when they have none to discover; they violate females of all ages; they insult the hoary head, and trample on all the decencies of life. This is no exaggerated picture: whoever has read the account of the proceedings of the French in Swabia, in Holland, in Italy, in Switzerland, knows that it is not.—And can there be men in Great Britain, of so base a temper, so maddened by malignity, so cankered by envy, so besotted by folly, so stupified as to their own safety, as to abet the designs of such an enemy? It is said there are such men; but I have too

firm a confidence in the general good sense of the people of Great Britain, to believe that such men are either many in number, or respectable for character, or formidable for connexion. The men of this Principality, at least, have nobly shewn, in a late instance, that they inherit the spirit of their ancestors, and have too ardent a love of their country to submit to a foreign yoke, under whatever specious promises of supporting the Rights of Men, of introducing Liberty and Equality, the invaders may attempt to deceive them.

What are these Rights of Men, this Liberty, this Equality, of which every man has heard so much, and of which few have any proper conception?—Let us see what they are in France itself.—There, no man has any Right in his person or in his property; both are absolutely at the disposal of the few persons who have usurped the Government—There, no man has any Liberty, except the Liberty of submitting to the worst of slavery; for what slavery can be worse than that of being

being subject to Laws which are perpetually changed, according to the caprice of the Ruling Faction?—*Ubi jus incertum, ibi jus nullum.*—As to Equality, if by it be meant an Equality of Property or Condition, there is no such thing in France; nor was there ever such a thing in any country since the world began. The Scripture speaks of *Pharaoh* and his *Princes* in the time of *Abraham*, when he was forced by a famine to go down to Egypt, about four hundred and thirty years after the Flood. *Abraham* himself had, at that period, men-servants and maid-servants, and was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. He and *Lot* had herdmen and servants of various kinds; and they every where met with Kings, who had subjects and soldiers. The Inequality of Property and Condition, which some silly or bad people are so fond of declaiming against, existed in the very infancy of the world, and must, from the nature of things, exist to the end of it.

Suppose a ship to be wrecked on an uninhabited

uninhabited island, and that all the officers perished, but that the common men and their wives were saved; here, if any where, we may meet with Liberty, and Equality, and the Rights of Man—what think you would be the consequence? —A State of Anarchy and Equality might, perhaps, subsist for a day; but Wisdom, Courage, Industry, Economy, would presently introduce a superiority of some over others; and, in order that each man might preserve for himself the Cabin he had built, the ground he had tilled, or the fish he had taken, all would agree in the propriety of appointing some one amongst the number, or more than one, to direct, govern, and protect the whole by the common strength. Thus the restriction of Liberty, and the destruction of Equality, and all the circumstances which superficial reasoners represent as grievances in society, and subversive of the Rights of Man, would of necessity be introduced. No one would be left at liberty to invade his neighbour's property; some would by skill

and activity become rich, and they would be allowed to bequeath at their death their wealth to their children; others would by idleness and debauchery remain poor; and having nothing to leave to their children, these, when grown up, would be under the necessity of maintaining themselves by working for their neighbours, till, by prudence and thrift, they acquired enough to purchase property of their own, on which they might employ their labour. This is no visionary reasoning; we have an instance of its reality in the colony at Botany Bay. The persons composing this colony, who by their crimes were made the outcasts of Great Britain, and were equal to each other, none of them possessing any thing, are already become very unequal in Property and Condition; and I am happy to add, in respectability of character. It is a general Law, which God has established throughout the world, that riches and respect should attend prudence and diligence; and, as all men are not equal in the faculties of either body

or

or mind, by which riches and respect are acquired, a necessity of superiority and subordination springs from the very nature which God has given us. All this I am sensible is so well understood by you, that I would not have mentioned the matter, had there not been present other auditors, who may not have fully considered the origin, relations, and dependencies, of civil society.

Are the French coming hither to enrich the nation? Will they pay attention to the poor of this country, when they have so many thousands of infinitely poorer persons in their own? Will they reward their seditious adherents amongst us?—Yes, they will reward them, as all history informs us such Traitors ever have been rewarded—they will reward them with contempt, pillage, beggary, slavery, and death. The Nation will be ruined by exorbitant impositions,—our Naval Power will be destroyed,—our Commerce transferred to France,—our Lands will be divided (not amongst those who wickedly covet

covet their neighbours' goods), but amongst French Soldiers, who will be every where stationed, as the Roman Soldiers were of old, to awe the people, and collect the taxes,—the flower of our youth will be compelled to serve in foreign countries, to promote the wicked projects of French ambition,—Great Britain will be made an appendage to continental Despotism.

I would say to the most violent Democrat in the kingdom,—Suppose the business done: after Seas of Blood have been shed, Millions of Lives lost, Towns plundered, Villages burned, the Royal Family exterminated, and unutterable calamity has been endured by persons of all ranks; —after all this has been done, what Advantages will you have obtained beyond what you now possess? Will your Property be better protected? Will your personal Liberty be more respected? Will our Code of Jurisprudence be improved? Will our Laws become more impartially administered? Quite the contrary of all this now takes place in France. I do not say that when things are settled there, the

the present wretched condition of its inhabitants will be continued, and I hope it will not; but I am sincerely of opinion that few of us will live to see such a system established in France, as will procure to its inhabitants half the Blessings, which our ancestors have enjoyed, which we do enjoy, and which it is our interest to take care that our Posterity shall enjoy, under the constitution of Great Britain.

In thus expressing my dislike of a Democracy, I only think with the greatest of all Poets, who expressed the same dislike near three thousand years ago;

Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανιη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,
Εἷς βασιλευς—*Homeri Il.* B. 204.

And, what is of more importance, I think with a vast majority of the people of this country—For though, *Thersites* like, there may be some

" Loquacious, loud, and turbulent of tongue;
" Aw'd by no shame, by no respect controul'd,
" In scandal busy, in reproaches bold:
" Who chiefly glory with licentious style
" To lash the great, and Monarchs to revile;"
Pope's Homer.

yet

yet the general spirit of the nation is of a contrary nature; it rises superior to all party petulance; and, in the language of *Ulysses*, boldly says to every seditious incendiary—

" Peace, factious Monster, born to vex the State,
" With wrangling talents form'd for foul debate:
" Curb that impetuous tongue, nor rashly vain,
" And singly mad, asperse the sov'reign reign."

This I am confident is the sentiment of the bulk of the people, and whilst it continues to be so, we may bid defiance to the threats of France, and to the desperate machinations of a few mean and discontented persons amongst ourselves.

Neither will the time or occasion permit me to state to you my reasons for thinking that the fabric of the French Republic cannot stand. Its members are not compacted together, either by individual simplicity of manners, or by the enthusiasm of public virtue. It wants a chaste attention to the union of the sexes by marriage; and it wants a pious attention to the improvement

improvement of the morals of its people by Religion: and these are the two strong pillars by which every political society is sustained, and its component parts cemented.

It is matter of extreme astonishment to me, how any man of sense can expect to carry on any Government without the aid of Religion—The Greeks and Romans had their *Elysium* and their *Tartarus*, their hopes and fears of futurity, to assist the impotency, and to extend the agency, of civil Laws. But when the doctrines of *Epicurus* became general at *Rome*, when men were taught that there was no future state, that Death was Eternal Sleep, the bonds of moral obligation, those sinews of society, were broken; then, says Paterculus, *non gradu sed præcipiti cursu a virtute descitum et ad vitia transcursum est*—and Rome fell.

There are many questions in Chronology, in History, in natural and moral Philosophy, and in every part of the circle of the sciences, which deservedly claim

claim our attention, and in the clear solution of which the mind of man would be greatly gratified; yet there is one question so superlatively important, that it annihilates, as it were, the importance of every other; and the question is this—What will become of us after death?—This is no speculative question, which may be decided either way with indifference; it is no partial question, in the decision of which, certain individuals can conceive themselves unconcerned; it is universal in it's extent, and it touches the heart of every individual who has sense to reflect on its meaning. *Quæstio de animâ multos movet, in quibus et me esse confiteor*, says St. *Austin* in one of his Letters to St. *Jerome*. I entirely adopt this sentiment of the venerable Father; and it seems to have been adopted by all mankind, as far as History can inform us of the opinions of past ages. The *Egyptians* we know were descended from *Ham*, one of the sons of *Noah*; and we are told by *Herodotus*, that the *Egyptians*

were the first who taught that the souls of men were immortal. I know no good reason for questioning the veracity of the Father of History in this particular, though some may be of opinion that there never was a time when any nation taught a contrary doctrine. Be that as it may, we are certain that the *Israelites*, when they came out of Egypt, near 1500 years before the birth of Christ, entertained the opinion that the soul of man was a substance distinct from the body, and existed within the earth in a state of separation from the body. This may be inferred from hence, that *Moses*, in more places than one, prohibited the Israelites from consulting *Necromancers*.—This prohibition does not prove either the reality of Necromancy, as a science, or the reality of the distinction between soul and body; but it proves that the *Israelites*, when they left Egypt, believed that distinction to be real. The records of antiquity do not, perhaps, permit us, on certain grounds, to assign to this opinion an

earlier date; yet there is probable ground for contending that an allusion is made to this doctrine, at least 400 years before the time of *Moses*. When God promised *Abram* that his posterity should inherit the land of Canaan, he said to him, "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age." The import of the phrase—"Thou shalt go to thy fathers"—seems to be something more than "Thou shalt die as thy fathers have done,"—it seems to refer to an opinion very common in after-ages, among all nations—that the souls of men went after death to the assembly of those who had died before them. It is acknowledged that there have been some few men who have held a contrary opinion. The Epicureans, and some other sects among the Heathens, the Sadducees among the Jews, the Arabians of the third century among the Christians, and the Materialists among modern philosophers, have maintained, that the Soul is, like the Body, mortal; that when the

Body ceases to live, the whole man ceases to exist. But the general belief of mankind has, in all ages and countries, been—that the Soul existed after Death. And our Saviour himself makes an evident distinction between the Soul and Body, when he says—(Matt. x. 28.)—"Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell."

I have entered into this matter, that I may put you upon your guard against certain wicked Teachers, who are creeping in among the common people, and attempting, by profane writings and evil communications, to unchristianize the world. Many men, alas! who call themselves Christians, who believe that they shall rise from the dead, and experience the retributions of a future state, live as if there was to be no Resurrection. They say to themselves, as the disciples of Epicurus would have said—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." These men, however, may by your exhortation be made

made sensible of their danger; by the *terrors of the Lord* they may be persuaded to live as Christians ought to do. But when a wicked Practice shall be founded on a false Principle, when French Philosophy shall be received amongst us, and this life be generally considered as the end of all—your difficulty in saving the souls of those committed to your care will be greatly augmented; and your exertions, I trust, will be proportioned to the difficulties you may have to encounter. Permit me to bring to your mind, as Ministers of the Gospel, the engagement you entered into when you were ordained Priests—"Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word; and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick, as to the whole, within your cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?"—To this question, proposed by the Bishop, each of you answered —"I will, the Lord being my helper."—

May God help both you and me so to perform the duties of our several stations, that at the last day we may not have cause to lament our negligence in any particular! The engagement now brought to your remembrance, respected your endeavours to heal schisms, and to drive away heresies: but it is of unspeakably more cogency, as it respects the resistance you ought to make to the subverters of the Christian faith. Never, since the fourth century, when the Apostate *Julian* undertook to re-establish Paganism on the ruins of Christianity, has the Religion of Christ experienced so great and general a shock as in our times. Deists there have been in every protestant and catholic country for the last two or three hundred years; but never till lately did they attempt to unite into Fraternities for the purpose of disseminating their pernicious principles among the lower classes of mankind. I entreat you, as you will answer for their souls at the tribunal of Christ, not to suffer the ignorant to be misled by these wicked sophists.

sophists. The blow which has been levelled by the French philosophers against Christianity may, under God's providence, be a mean of purifying the religion of his Son; it has already overturned the papal throne: and the errors of the church of Rome have always appeared to me a prolific source of infidelity. I do not indeed agree with *Calvin* in his violence against popes and cardinals, expressed by him in the following words—*Quid tres aut quatuor Pontifices enumero? Quasi verò dubium sit qualem religionis speciem professi sunt jampridem Pontifices cum toto Cardinalium collegio, et hodie profiteantur. Primum enim arcanæ illius theologiæ quæ inter eos regnat caput est—Nullum esse Deum.—Alterum, quæcunque de Christo scripta sunt ac docentur, mendacia esse et imposturas.—Tertium, doctrinam de futurâ vitâ et ultimâ resurrectione meras esse fabulas.*—Calvini Instit. l. iv. c. 7. s. 27.—Gracious Heaven! if this be a true picture of the Roman Hierarchy, can we regret it's fall? Ought we not rather to be astonished at God's forbear-

ance, in having permitted it to stand so long? But it better becomes us to examine ourselves, than to censure others; and there certainly is room for inquiry, whether all Protestant Churches are so pure in doctrine, so perfect in discipline, so truly christian in practice, as to have nothing to fear for themselves from the fall of the Church of Rome.

In consequence of the Act of Parliament lately passed for the better maintenance of Curates, I have received several applications to augment the stipends of such as are ill provided for. To some of these I could not pay a favourable attention. The stipend ought not to be regulated by the riches of the Rector or Vicar—I hope a Bishop will never have an authority of that kind committed to him—but by the value of the Living, and the nature of the duty which is performed. Now the Livings in this Diocese are in general so small, that if I used the full liberty which the Law allows, I might, indeed, benefit the Curate,

Curate, but I should, in many instances, distress and injure the Rector or Vicar. I wish to use as little compulsion in this matter as possible: I shall with great readiness hear the complaints, and, as far as my notions of equity will allow, redress the grievances of the Curates; but it will be more agreeable to me, if the Incumbents will leave them no grievances to complain of. Curacies in general spring from Pluralities; and Pluralities are allowed, on account of the incompetency of many Livings to afford a decent maintenance to a Clergyman. I am no Leveller; I do not wish to see all Livings of the same value; but I do wish to see no Living in the kingdom of less value than 100*l.* a year; and if that should ever be brought about, I should then wish Pluralities to be abolished. Not that I think 100*l.* a year an income sufficient for the proper support of a Clergyman and his Family; but it is enough to keep him above want: and setting out with such a Living, an expectation of obtaining a better

better, not another in addition, may preserve him from discontent, and animate his zeal in the discharge of his duty.

And now, Reverend Brethren, I bid you for the fifth time, since I have been your Diocesan, farewell. God knows whether I shall live to meet you in this way again; to the ordinary uncertainty of human life, there is, at present, superadded a dangerous crisis. But the event of things is in the hand of God; it belongs to man to do, on all occasions, what he thinks right, and to acquiesce in whatever happens. This is my opinion; I hope and am persuaded that it is yours also; and I sincerely implore Almighty God to extend his blessing to us all.

August 1798.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN 1813.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN

1813.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

IT is not unknown, I presume, to many amongst you, that I have been your Bishop for above thirty years; but it cannot be known by any of you that nine years before I became Bishop of Landaff, I published in London a short anonymous Tract, entitled, "A brief State of the Principles of Church Authority."

A desire of settling my own Opinions, on some important points, was my sole motive for then making that Publication. Few of you, I believe, have ever met with it, and fewer, probably, of those who have formerly met with it, have ever perused

perused it; and not one, perhaps, of those who may formerly have perused it, now recollects its contents.—Under such circumstances, I do not deem it necessary to make any apology for introducing it, at present, to your consideration. The subject of it demands the most dispassionate discussion at all times, and especially at this time, when such subjects are much agitated, and, I trust, always agitated with candour and liberality, by both Churchmen and Dissenters of different denominations.

A brief State of the Principles of Church Authority.

In order to form a definite and unprejudiced Idea of the Authority of a Christian Church, let us consider the matter abstractedly from all present Christian Establishments; and suppose a nation of Pagans to have received, by some means or other, the Bible translated into their own language: let it

it be supposed also, that they believed all the facts related in it, to be true; and, of consequence, held themselves obliged to conform their conduct to the rules therein prescribed.

There is a great natural inequality in the corporal strength of different individuals, and in the combined strength of different numbers of individuals: this has, in all ages and countries, been the most common and the most unjust source of personal and national dominion. There is a similar inequality in the intellectual powers of different men, and of different assemblies of men: and it is perhaps more difficult to forbear affecting a tyranny over the Opinions, than over the Persons, of mankind.

Let it be taken for granted, however, that every individual in this nation of Pagans, readily allowed to every other the same liberty which he claimed for himself, the liberty of understanding his Bible according to the measure of his own capacity, and of promulgating without restraint,

restraint, without loss of reputation or fortune, what he thought he understood.

The equity of this principle cannot be controverted, without subverting the most indefeasible rights of mankind: and this being admitted, the social propensities of human nature would soon lead individuals to form, and the commands of their Bible would enjoin them to frequent, public assemblies for the worship of God. Hence there would spring up in this nation many distinct religious Societies, differing somewhat from each other with respect to particular tenets, but agreeing in the general belief of the Bible; they would have some distinguishing marks, and yet a strong resemblance throughout—*Facies non omnibus una, nec diversa tamen.*

Socinians would unite in public worship with Socinians; Sabellians with Sabellians; Arians with Arians; and every sect would be esteemed unorthodox by the rest. A firm conviction, however, of the general imbecility of human reason, a reverence for the Example of Jesus Christ,

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and a respect for that new commandment of loving one another, which they would have learnt from their Bible, would prevent them from murdering one another, for, what none of them could help, a diversity of opinion arising from a diversity of intellect.

Each of these distinct Societies would, as to the purpose of their union, be absolutely free and independent, subject to no manner of inspection, direction, or control, from any other, or from all the others united together. For, if the wisest individual in the whole nation, could have no right to compel the most unwise to be of his opinion in any point; *à fortiori*, an assembly composed of individuals inferior in wisdom to the wisest, could have no right over an assembly composed of individuals superior in wisdom to the most unwise: because these assemblies, considered as distinct intellectual persons, approach nearer to an equality of wisdom, than the extreme individuals, whom we yet supposed to be independent of

each other in every point of private opinion.

Giving the name of Churches to these several assemblies, we may define a Christian Church, to be, a voluntary assembly of men acknowledging the truth of the Bible, and meeting together for the public worship of God. A Church is a voluntary assembly; and, as such, subject to no external superintendence or jurisdiction: but as no business can be commodiously transacted in any assembly without the establishment of certain rules, appointing the time and place of convention, and regulating the proceedings of the members when met, every Church must be subject to an internal jurisdiction, must have an internal power of framing such ordinances as may be thought most conducive towards the attaining the end of their meeting.

It is probable that the different Churches, into which we have supposed this newly converted nation to be divided, would differ as much from each other in their

Ordinances for the celebration of public worship, and in their modes of Church Government, as in their opinions concerning points of Doctrine. Some, knowing that God was to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth, would think all ceremonies improper; as springing, in their opinion, from superstition, and producing a species of Idolatry. Others, bearing in mind the infirmity of human nature, would esteem ceremonies useful in preserving order, and in elevating the intellectual conceptions to a spiritual devotion, by the impressions made on the organs of sense; and they would think themselves fully authorized in the moderate use of them, from the Institution of the Jewish Church. Some, jealous of their spiritual liberties, and apprehensive of the encroachments which bad men might be disposed to make upon them, would be for lodging the power of the whole Assembly in the Suffrages of the majority of the Members. Others, considering that most public Assemblies were guided by the finesse and management of

a few men superior in sagacity or dishonesty to the rest, and that questions of much importance were often decided in a tumultuary way, without being duly weighed, would be desirous of intrusting the concerns of their Church to a few men of approved probity and acknowledged wisdom, selected by themselves from their own body: of these again there would probably be made a distinction; by some they would be invested with an equal, by others with an unequal authority.

It might be expected too, that different Churches would with too much warmth endeavour to support their different modes of Government and Worship, by attempting to prove them correspondent to such as were established by the Apostles; taking it for granted, that the nearer they approached to the model of an Apostolic Church, the more perfect they would become: not considering, in the first place, that the Apostles might, for the sake of gaining the Jews to Christianity, have a respect

respect in a great many particulars to the forms of the Jewish Synagogue, which are in no wise binding upon Christians of later ages; nor, in the second, that the Apostles were endued with such extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, as might make their example, in many instances of spiritual discipline especially, very unfit for future Christians to follow.

None of these several Churches could have any power of compelling any individual, either to become a Member of their Society, or to continue one; for the End of the Constitution of a religious Society is frustrated by Force, the worship of God is vitiated by Compulsion, and when it ceases to be voluntary, becomes not indifferent, but impious.

But ought not Private Opinions to be overruled by Public Wisdom? ought not the religious conduct of individuals to be regulated in each Church by the Prescript of the whole Body? No, by no means. In civil Institutions indeed, Dissentients from the general voice ordinarily acquiesce

under it, and individuals are justly concluded by the determination of the Majority: but in religious Societies, the case is *toto cœlo* different; and this difference is derived from the different Ends men have in view, in forming civil and religious associations. A man's Person may be protected, and his Property secured, by the associated Force of many; but his moral Disposition cannot be meliorated, his Soul cannot be saved, by the associated Wisdom of his Church, by any other Man but himself. This difference will appear clearer, by examining the Origin and Extent of Civil as opposed to Ecclesiastical Power.

Civil Power arises from general Compact, and can be neither different in kind from, nor superior in degree to, that which the individuals composing a community intrusted to the Magistrate, upon their entrance into Society. It is to little purpose to object, that a Social Compact is a mere creature of the imagination, which never existed; so are the objects of many parts

parts of Geometry and Natural Philosophy; yet no one thinks of denying the truths demonstrated by Euclid or Newton, though the Lines of the one, or the Elastic Mediums of the other, should have nothing in nature perfectly corresponding to the Ideas annexed to these terms. Civil Power, in kind, respects the defence of person and property; in degree, it is variable within certain limits, which may be ascertained. For, on the one hand, the will of the constituent members cannot restrain civil power indefinitely; they annihilate it's very existence, if they do not allow it to circumscribe in some degree the natural liberty of individuals: the extent indeed of this circumscription must be defined by their own appointment. On the other hand, the will of the constituent members of a civil community cannot extend the Civil Power beyond a certain boundary, beyond what would result from the transfer of all the alienable rights of individuals. These private rights are transferred to the Magistrate, to be used

by him for the public good; and each individual is induced to make the transfer, from the expectation that his own private emolument will be eventually promoted, by the general application of private rights to public utility.

The power then of the civil Magistrate is absolutely dependent on the will of the Community, and absolutely independent of the will of every individual in it: yet, though it be independent of individuals, it is not arbitrary in it's operation, nor unlimited in it's extent, even over them. It's action, in particular cases, is circumscribed by the prospect of general expediency; and it's extent, in all cases, is terminated by the unalienable rights of individuals. Let it once step beyond this Fence, and it becomes not Civil Power, but Tyrannic Oppression, not delegated authority, but usurped dominion. If the Magistrate demands from an individual the whole of his property, for the public service, he asks what the individual has a right to give. If he requires him to expose his life

life in a just war, for the preservation of the lives of the Community, he makes a requisition which the individual has a right to grant, and which (upon the supposition that he conceded to the Magistrate an authority of applying, according to his discretion, all his private alienable rights, for the public good) he is under a perfect obligation to grant, however repugnant it may be to his inclination, or detrimental to his happiness. Thus far the power of the Magistrate may reach, and it can reach no further; he cannot justly command an individual to infringe any one law of nature or revelation, to use his personal strength or the faculties of his mind in any one way which he had no right to use them in, before he entered into Society; because that would be to use a power over the individual, which the individual neither did nor could transfer to him.

Ecclesiastical Power arises also from general compact; but it is far less extensive than civil power. The will of the Majority,

Majority, or, which amounts to the same thing, the will of the Magistrate, which in all legal Governments coincides with that of the Majority, is and ought to be decisive in every matter of civil dissension. But the will of the Majority of the constituent members of a Church, cannot bind any one individual in any one point: because the subject-matter of their authority, is not the duty of all men towards all, but of each man towards his God; the Essence of which consists in what the will of the Majority can neither make nor destroy, in what their wisdom can neither know nor control in anywise, in the conscience of each individual. In opposition to the will of the Majority, every individual may plead his conscience, in excuse for his non-conformity in points of the utmost seeming indifference; and if he does so, there is no compulsive remedy. No assembly upon earth, however distinguished by numbers, weight, or wisdom, can justly claim a right of compelling the meanest individual to act contrary to his

conscience, be that conscience ever so unreasonably scrupulous or apparently erroneous: for that would be claiming a right of compelling a man to be guilty of a certain Sin; and no Society can compel a man to be guilty of a certain Sin, though the matter of the action constituting the Sin should happen to be (as in the case of an erroneous conscience it may be) highly advantageous to the public good. A Society cannot have this right, because an Individual cannot transfer this right; and the power of every Society, whether civil or religious, is neither greater nor less than what the separate individual gave up to the community.

Has a Church then no right to defend itself against ill-judging or designing men? can it neither restrain the turbulent, nor silence the blasphemous? has it, strictly speaking, no power over any of it's members? Yes, it has an absolute power, not of compulsion, but of exclusion, and it leaves to the Civil Magistrate the Punishment of Turbulence. The will of the Majority,

Majority, cannot justly compel an individual to the use of any one rule or ceremony, which he thinks to be Superstitious or Idolatrous, or any way displeasing to his God; but the will of the Majority, may justly exclude a dissenting individual from their Christian association. You shall not, they may say to him, be in any thing a partaker with us, unless you will be a partaker with us in all things. You set up your singular opinion, in opposition to our general judgment, and refuse to act in conformity to our determination, because you think it wrong. We question not your right of dissenting from us, whatever opinion we may have of your prudence in using that right; we question not your integrity, but we think you deceived. And remember on your part, we entreat you, that we are as free as yourself; we claim no power over you but from your own consent, nor can we suffer you to claim any over us but from ours. You refuse to obey numbers, can you expect that numbers should obey you? No, we reject

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you as a member of our community, because you do not submit in every thing to the rules which we think proper to establish. God must be the judge in this matter betwixt us and you. We are as to this point independent of you and of every human authority; and your independence we acknowledge is not a whit inferior to ours: but both of us are dependent upon God, both of us answerable for the rectitude or obliquity of our judgments to him. If we refuse you Christian communion without just cause, the Sin, be it greater or less, is ours: if without just cause you make a Schism in the Church of Christ, the Sin, be it greater or less, lies at your door. It behoves us both to be circumspect in our decisions; and since it is a matter of great moment, it behoves each of us candidly to suppose that the other hath used his utmost attention in forming his opinion: for this will dispose us to a mutual distrust of our own, and a mutual tolerance of the other's judgment; a temper highly necessary in every religious dispute,

dispute, lest we chance to aggravate the criminality of a vincible error by the accumulated guilt of an unchristian malignity.

This power of Expulsion every Church has over every one of it's members; and I do not see how, as a Church, it can claim more. Nay, if you arm it with secular authority, and give it moreover a faculty (which since the times of the Apostles no Church ever had) of looking into the very hearts of men, of clearly distinguishing between Schism proceeding from a wilful opposition to Truth, and Schism proceeding from a conscientious regard to Duty; I do not apprehend that you will give it a power much different from that of Expulsion, unless you could at the same time give it a faculty of foreseeing that it's censure, like the Chastisement of an Apostolic Rod, would tend to Edification and not to destruction; to the Salvation of the Souls of those upon whom it was inflicted, rather than to the rendering them obdurate and irreclaimable.

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In the formation of Christian Churches amongst a nation of Pagans, it is probable that the division of believers into Clergy and Laity, into regular teachers and hearers, would not be immediately made. Every one would presume it was his duty to preach the word to his Brethren, according to the best of his apprehension; and he would think himself authorized in this presumption, not only from the practice of the Jewish Synagogue and the first Christian Churches, but from the permission of St. Paul himself; who, in forbidding women to speak in the Church, may be thought to give liberty to every other person. This general liberty, however, would soon be restrained by general utility; a regard for decency and order and mutual Edification, would necessarily introduce the establishment of an order of men, under some denomination or other, to whom the offices of preaching, praying, administering the sacraments, visiting the sick, comforting the feeble-minded, admonishing the flagitious, and,

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in short, feeding the flock of Christ, would, by common consent, be especially intrusted.

And here a great question arises, which has not been very satisfactorily decided: Whether men thus constituted to the public Ministry, should be obliged to perform the various parts of ministerial duty, according to a mode prescribed to them by the general voice of the Church in which they ministered, or in conformity to their own particular judgments? Was their office of a civil nature, this question could scarcely have been put: every one would have allowed, that their mode of acting might have been regulated by those from whom they derived their authority of acting at all. But in the case in point, it has been thought that Ministers were independent of those by whom they were appointed to minister.

If God had, in the present times, vouchsafed to all those who should be appointed to minister in the Church of Christ, such an especial Grace as appertained

tained to the Apostles and first Ministers of the Gospel, then indeed an Authority might be claimed for every Minister, independent of the will of his particular Church; all would willingly submit their private opinion to the judgment of him, who, being guided by the Spirit of Truth, could not err. Upon any other supposition, it seems as if the matter should be considered in the following manner.

In the decision of this question, a distinction may be made between indifferent rites and evangelical doctrines. With respect to rites, which are neither commanded nor forbidden in the Bible, and which may be therefore esteemed indifferent, every Minister owes a perfect submission to his Church, in the performance of them; but as to the doctrines, he owes a submission, not to his Church, but to his Bible. This distinction, however, does not remove the doubt; the question recurs, Who shall be the judge, whether a particular doctrine be con-

tained in the Bible, or not? Shall every Minister judge for himself, or shall the Church judge for all? The Church cannot judge for all, unless it arrogate to itself a species of Infallibility; nor can you allow each public Teacher to judge for himself, unless you grant that infallibility to him which you denied to his Church, to the wisdom of an individual which you denied to the united wisdom of many individuals.

Every Minister of the Gospel of Christ, has an undoubted right to promulgate, is under an indispensable obligation to promulgate, in season and out of season, what he in his own private judgment apprehends to be the truth. No assembly of men can lay upon him an obligation to preach any thing as a doctrine of Christianity, which he does not believe to be revealed in the Holy Scriptures; nor to conceal any thing, which he apprehends ought to be made known. In all points of doctrine, he is absolutely independent of the will of his particular

Church, and of all Churches in general. Articles may be proposed to him as explanatory of Scripture doctrines; he will do well to avail himself of the instruction contained in them. His subscription may be required to the belief of them, or he may be prohibited from preaching against them; but these and other similar restraints, though very properly calculated to exclude from an entrance into the ministry men who profess not the doctrines of the Church in which they are appointed to minister, cannot bind him as to his future conduct in anywise; he cannot promise the performance of an impossibility; and his belief depends not upon his will but his knowledge, and must be variable therewith; he cannot promise the performance of an act which his conscience disavows, and it would be a violation of the most sacred obligation of conscience to preach what he does not believe to be true, or to conceal what he does; to teach for Gospel the commandments of men, or to withhold from

speaking the things which he believes to be delivered in the Gospel; with Peter and John he may put the question, "Whether it be right in the sight of "God, to hearken unto you more than "unto God, judge ye."

The conclusion from the premises seems to be, that in public teaching, every minister, after using the best means for the information of his understanding, is under a conscientious obligation, in all cases, to follow his own private judgment, how repugnant soever it may chance to be to the avowed tenets of the Church in which he is appointed to minister.

On the other side of the question, it appears to be wholly contradictory to common sense, that an individual appointed to the office of a public teacher, by the general consent of an assembly of Christians, should have a right of teaching doctrines in that assembly, which the majority of that assembly hold to be erroneous; that the opinion of one should be preferred to that of many. It is granted,

granted, truth cannot be investigated by voting, nor is it always with the majority; but it is likely to be with the majority as with the minority, with numbers as with one.

Let us suppose a Church to consist of an hundred persons; and that one of the number is elected by the rest to the Sacerdotal Office; and that this man, honestly using the unalienable right of private judgment, denies or maintains in his public teaching, doctrines which the rest believe or do not believe to be true. Can it be supposed that the ninety-nine are under an obligation to hear what they think damnable Heresies? Is not every individual amongst them under as perfect an Obligation, after the first and second admonition, to avoid this man as a Heretic, as the Minister himself is to preach what he in his private judgment thinks to be conformable to the truth in Christ? Can a Church of Trinitarians conscientiously listen to a Minister denying the pre-existence of Christ and the personality

of the Holy Ghost? or can a Socinian Church, support the preaching of a Sabellian Minister? Can it be fairly required of any sect of Christians, to tolerate teachers, who (without producing any supernatural credentials of their superior knowledge) represent their principles as erroneous, and their consequent practice as impious? But the Minister is an honest and conscientious man, sincerely wishes to preach the pure and unadulterated word of God, and acts in every thing according to the impulses of an upright heart and the dictates of an unbiassed (as appears to him) judgment.—Be it so—yet why will you deny that honesty and integrity of conscience to the hearers, which you so liberally, and we hope fairly, grant to their teacher? why will you compel them to hear what they perhaps think Blasphemy, whilst you allow him to abstain from the promulgation of what he perhaps thinks Blasphemy? why may not the ninety-nine take from the hundredth that power of

of preaching the word of God, which for the general good they voluntarily gave to him, when they think it no longer likely to promote the end for which it was given?—But no number of Christians can take from any individual, much less from a Minister, the right of preaching the word of God.—True. Nor can any individual, much less can a Minister, take from a number of Christians, the right of rejecting what they think repugnant to the word of God. They take not from him, as a Christian, the right of propagating the kingdom, by preaching the Gospel, of Christ; but they take from him, as a Minister, the right of preaching it to them, of preaching what he takes to be Gospel, but what they think is nothing less.

From the matter thus considered, there seems to be, on the part of the Minister, a perfect right to follow in his public teaching his own interpretation of Scripture; and on the part of the Church, a perfect right to reject a Minister who does not, in his public teaching, follow

their interpretation of Scripture. These interpretations may be different; and when they are so, two perfect and contradictory rights will arise: a conclusion this, which appears to involve an absurdity.

In matters of civil dispute, equal and opposite rights cannot be supposed to exist for any length of time; because the Magistrate makes himself a final judge of right and wrong. But in religious controversy, they must necessarily arise; unless you suppose the intellects of mankind to be precisely equal in strength, and a consequent coincidence of opinion to take place; or unless you constitute some infallible judge to decide between the maintainers of discordant doctrines. From the premises this conclusion may probably be thought a reasonable deduction — That every Church, as a Voluntary Assembly, hath a right to reject a Minister, voluntarily appointed by themselves, who preaches doctrine opposite to their belief.

If

If it should be urged, that there is an injustice in taking from a Minister his livelihood, for being an honest man, and preaching conscientiously the truth; it may be answered, that he is not deprived of his subsistence for being an honest man, or for preaching conscientiously the truth, but for being (in the judgment of the people who pay him) a misinformed man, and preaching not truth, but error. There may be some hardship in the case; but you cannot call it injustice, unless you take upon you to decide the point in debate, and pronounce the Church to be in an Error. If the Church took from him, on account of his diversity of Opinion, whatever he possessed exclusive of his ministerial connexion with it, that indeed would be an act of injustice; but in excluding him from the ministry, you still leave him his property as a citizen; nay, you leave him his right as a Christian of shaking off the dust of his feet against you, of turning to some other assembly of Christians, of labouring

labouring in the vineyard of Christ, who will assuredly give him his due reward and an ample recompense for whatever he may have suffered for his Service, if he has hearkened to the suggestions of a well-informed Conscience.

The Civil Magistrate has an undoubted Right to give vigour to the Operation of Natural Law, by the positive appointment of penal Sanctions, to punish with unrelenting rigour every violation of the Duties of perfect Obligation. And as the punishment of Crimes is less useful to the State than their prevention, he seems to have a right to introduce amongst the members of his Community, such precepts of Morality or Religion, as are most likely to restrain the intemperance of selfish Passion, and to create in the hearts of his Citizens a disposition to perform such Duties of imperfect Obligation as unavoidably escape the Censure of civil Laws. But whatever Right may be allowed to the Civil Magistrate, of introducing amongst his Subjects

Subjects what he may judge to be the most perfect System of Morality or Religion, no Right can be allowed him of supporting his own Religion by the suppression of others. For, from the admission of this Principle, a Jewish or a Roman Catholic Magistrate would be under an Obligation to defend his Church against Christianity or Protestantism; a Mahometan Magistrate would have a Right to crush every Christian who should refuse to acknowledge the Mission of his Prophet; and even a Pagan Magistrate would have a Right to extirpate every Theist, who from a zeal for the Lord Jehovah should break down the Altars of Baal.

But this Subject is not particularly connected with the present disquisition, in which nothing is claimed for the Established Church, but what is claimed for every other Church,—the rigid Right of explaining to it's Minister what doctrines it holds, and of permitting none to minister in it who do not profess the same

same Belief with itself. There must be a coercive Power lodged somewhere; no one will affirm that a Congregation of Christians has not a Right of rejecting a Minister, who preaches to them Mahometanism or Paganism; and no reason can be given for the Exclusion of such a Minister, which will not operate in some degree in every Instance of a Minister's preaching contrary to the Belief of his Church.

To what Extent, and in what Circumstances, it may be consistent with Christian Charity to use the Right here contended for, is quite another Question; into the discussion of which I will not at present enter:—Things may be lawful for us, which may *not be expedient*.

APPENDIX.

In this Tract it is said that every Church has a Right of explaining to it's Ministers what doctrines it holds, and of permitting none to minister in it, who do

do not profess the same belief with itself. This conclusion has been thought by some, whose judgment I greatly esteem, to be erroneous; and I have been advised by them, many years ago, to reconsider the reasoning from which it is deduced. I have reconsidered the whole pamphlet, and must own that I cannot perceive any false reasoning in any part of it. I am sensible however that the mind of Man, when it has once come to a conclusion on any subject, is apt, in every subsequent examination of it, to give too much weight to the arguments by which the conclusion is established, and too little to those by which it is opposed; and I am far from being confident that my mind, in reviewing the subject, is free from the general infirmity. I may still be in an error, and, if I am, I can only request you, my Reverend Brethren, to believe that it is an Error perfectly involuntary. I have not been betrayed into it, from a design or a desire of saying any thing, in support of the

Established

Established Church, beyond or beside, what I thought true with respect to every other *voluntary* Assembly of Christians, associated for divine worship.

Whether the Majority of the Members of any civil Community, have a right to compel all the members of it, to *pay* towards the maintenance of a set of Teachers appointed by the Majority, to preach a particular System of doctrines, is a question which might admit a serious discussion. I was once of opinion that the Majority had this right in *all* cases, and I am still of opinion, that they have it in *many*. But I am staggered when I consider that a case may happen, in which the established Religion may be the religion of a minority of the people; that minority, at the same time, possessing a majority of the property, out of which the Ministers of the Establishment are to be paid.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN JUNE 1809.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN JUNE

1809.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

SINCE I last met you in this place, I have had occasion to desire that you would favour me with information respecting the number of Schools, public and private, existing in your several Parishes. To those who have been so obliging as to attend to my request, I take this opportunity of returning my thanks; and to those (not many in number) who paid no attention to my desire, I am unwilling to impute a culpable inadvertence, or wilful refusal, they may have been unavoidably prevented from complying with my request; at any rate they cannot be accused, as

having neglected their oath of Canonical Obedience, for though a request was preferred, an injunction was not issued. On similar occasions they will in future, I hope, well consider the relation in which they stand to me as their Diocesan, and to the State, as Ministers maintained at the public expense for the promotion of the public good.

I was not prompted by an idle curiosity to give you this trouble; I did it at the request of the Archbishop of the Province, whose attention had been called to the subject by some proceedings in the House of Commons, relative to the Establishment of Parochial Schools throughout England and Wales. I sent to His Grace the best account which I could obtain of the state of general Education in this Diocese, accompanying the Statement with a frank declaration of my own opinion on the project which had excited the inquiry. I will read to you the letter which I sent on that occasion.

"My

" My Lord Archbishop,

" ACCORDING to my promise, I now " transmit to Your Grace the best account " which I can obtain of the Schools in " my Diocese. In eighty-five Parishes " there are public Schools, and in fifteen " of them more Schools than one — in " eighty-seven Parishes there are no public " Schools—and in thirty-six I have not " obtained any answer to the inquiry " which I directed to be made. In addi- " tion to the public Schools, there are " many private ones in the Diocese; not " a few of these consisting of thirty chil- " dren or more. Many of these Schools " are supported by voluntary contribution; " and of those where the Parents are " obliged to pay for their children's school- " ing, the price is from twopence half- " penny, to threepence a week, and for " this they are taught reading, writing, " the two or three first rules in arithmetic, " and in general the Church Catechism.

" If Your Grace will allow me to deliver

" my opinion on this subject, I think
" that the education of the children of the
" Poor is a matter well deserving the con-
" sideration of Government, inasmuch as
" a proper education of the lower Classes
" is amongst them, as amongst all others,
" the parent of piety, of good morals, and
" of good manners. But I think, at the
" same time, that an Education suited
" to the circumstances and situation of
" the children of the Poor, is in very few
" parts of Great Britain so neglected, as
" to require the interposition of the Legis-
" lature to compel a general amendment
" of it.—It is computed that there are nine
" Births to two Marriages—now there are
" very few parents (comparatively speak-
" ing) among the peasants or manufac-
" turers of the Country, who cannot spare
" threepence a week from their earnings,
" for two or three years, to each of their
" four or five children for their Education;
" and where they cannot afford even such
" a pittance for such a purpose, I think
" so well of mankind as to believe, that it
" would

" would readily be supplied to them by " their richer neighbours, if from their " sobriety and industry they appeared to " be deserving objects of such bene- " volence and munificence.

" I am, &c.

" *R. L.*"

Such was and such is the opinion I have formed on this subject. But, though I cannot adopt the sentiments of the Gentleman who first introduced it into the House of Commons, I most willingly concur in the general belief, that he was influenced in doing it by the most patriotic motives.

You have heard an account of the number of Schools in this Diocese: as to the manner in which the public Schools are conducted, some of them, I understand, are very meritoriously managed by their respective Trustees; and others very improperly, the endowments either being not paid at all, or applied to purposes for which they were not intended by their founders.

It is not perhaps in my power, and it undoubtedly is not in my inclination, to oblige by compulsatory means, the Trustees of Schools to do their duty; but I solemnly entreat them to set a due value on the testimony of a good conscience in this particular, and seriously to reflect on the account, whether of omission or commission, to which all of us will be subjected, when the passions, prejudices, interests by which men are chained, as it were, to the earth, and their progress towards heaven so much impeded, will be done away. And with equal earnestness I entreat such of you as happen to be acquainted with the abuses which may have insensibly crept into scholastic foundations, to exert your best endeavours in removing them. I am far from meaning, by this exhortation, that you should involve yourselves in expensive litigations, or in irritating contentions with your Parishioners; but much may be done by well timed and well tempered expostulation, with those who are concerned in the management

management of such Trusts: the mere observance of your disinterested and discreet zeal in so good a work, may awaken the conscience of an individual, whom a legal prosecution would have hardened into an obstinacy in injustice.

But though you may very properly hesitate about becoming principals, in rectifying by legal means the abuses of endowed Schools, you can run no risk of giving offence to any one, by supporting, regulating, and inspecting Schools which are not endowed, and by endeavouring to establish such in whatever parts of your Parishes you may judge them to be wanted. Of such Schools, especially as applied to the Children of the poor, prudent women (whose time is of less value than that of men) would be the properest instructors. Poor boys and girls might, in such Schools, be educated together, from the age of six to that of ten years; and in that interval they would be made, not indeed great Scholars, but they would be instructed in every thing which could

reasonably be expected from a gratuitous national Education of the Children of the Poor. I really cannot entertain a suspicion that voluntary contribution, if properly solicited, would be insufficient either in this Diocese or in any Diocese in the Kingdom, to afford a suitable education to the children of the poor, without recurring to an additional burden on the parishes, which there is reason to fear would be in time much mismanaged.

What men of rank, what men of the liberal professions, what landholders or opulent farmers, what respectable tradesmen or manufacturers, what persons of any denomination in decent circumstances, would grudge paying threepence or sixpence a week, for the pious and benevolent purpose of having one or two of their poor neighbours children taught to read their Bible, of the contents of which without such assistance they must remain in a manner ignorant? When a poor man has been taught, in his infancy, to read his Bible, he becomes possessed of a Shield

to

to protect him, through life, against the evils and mischances peculiarly incident to his station. Though poverty should attack him and tempt him to dishonesty, his Bible will instruct him to trust in God, who never forsakes the righteous: though proud men should insult him, and rich men contemn him, and powerful men oppress him, and no man befriend him, yet in every page of that holy Book he will find consolation; he will there learn that God is no respecter of persons, but that piety and probity, and patient continuance in well-doing, will finally be rewarded with Everlasting Life.

I greatly prefer an education of poor people's children by voluntary Contribution, to one by a compulsive parochial Taxation; and I prefer it principally on this ground, that it tends to unite the rich and the poor together in bonds of benevolence and subordination, of good-will and gratitude; and it tends also to generate, in them both, that Christian disposition of mutual love, and of respect for religion

as

as a rule of life, which is the greatest blessing that either of them can possess. The perfection of virtue consists in doing good to Mankind, in obedience to the will of God; and what good can be greater than that of generating in a poor man's child, habits of piety and good manners? Habits thus generated will accompany him through life, and prevent the growth of rudeness, swearing, pilfering, lying, which at an advanced age produce a copious crop of vice, dangerous to the common weal, and ruinous to the Individual.

If I have said nothing of the advantages which the Poor may enjoy in their progress through life, from being taught to read (and also to write, for in four years they may learn to do both) it is not because I think slightly of these advantages, but because I consider them only as secondary objects when compared with Religion; though I am sensible that, as the world is now constituted, they will by many parents be considered as of primary concernment, being well fitted to enable their children

to

to lay hold of every fortuitous circumstance which may raise them from indigence to opulence, from an inferior situation to eminence and independence. This is certainly so true in this commercial and enterprising country, that there are innumerable instances of men, who, being able to read and write, have from the lowest beginnings acquired a degree of distinction which they could not otherwise have attained: we are not justified in saying with the Poet—*Haud facile emerguunt quorum virtutibus obstat Res angustu domi.* —This temporal consequence of Education, so far from being an objection, is an additional motive for the benevolence I have been recommending to your consideration.

Some men, observing the irreligious and flagitious lives for which men who have had the best educations are frequently notorious, may be of opinion, that the morality of a State has little connexion with the education of it's members—the wisdom of antiquity and the practice

of

of all nations are in opposition to this opinion—

Invidus, iracundus, iners, vinosus, amator,
Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit,
Si modo culturæ patientem commodet aurem.

If Heathen culture was esteemed thus efficacious in subduing envy, anger, idleness, drunkenness, and other evil propensities of our nature, who can doubt of the superior utility of a Christian Education? and that alone is the Education of which I am speaking. Teach a child his duty to God, and his neighbour, and he will of himself soon see that the modish accomplishments, as they are called, of fashionable life, are neither suited to his station in society, nor conducive to the advancement of moral excellence in any station.

Among the various discussions which have taken place on this subject of national Education, a reference has been frequently made to the Education of the common people in Scotland, and even in the preamble of the Bill before alluded to, it is said—" Whereas the Instruction of

"Youth tends most materially to the "promotion of morality and virtue, and "to the formation of good members of "society, whereof we have the most con- "vincing proof by long experience, in that "part of the United Kingdom called "Scotland:"—Now, without meaning to insinuate any disparagement of the Education in Scotland, or to institute any comparison between the Morals of persons of the same Class, in the northern and southern part of the Kingdom, it may be reasonably, I think, doubted, whether Education is either the sole or the principal cause of the superior morality which is here assumed, but not proved, to exist in Scotland.

As a nation, Scotland is comparatively poorer than England, and poverty is, both to nations and individuals, a species of practical Education; it teaches humility, promotes industry, encourages œconomy, inspires piety, deadens vanity, roots up pride, and lessens that fondness for fashionable follies, which riches are apt to plant and

and nurture to maturity. Poverty, by not supplying the means of dissipation, in a manner compels men to a virtuous simplicity of manners; by poverty I do not mean absolute want, which may tempt men to be guilty of fraud, depredation, violence and theft, but such a station as renders labour and prudence necessary for the acquisition of the means of creditable subsistence, and frugality necessary in the use of them when acquired. In a few years Scotland will rival England in Commerce and in Wealth; I pray to God that it may never imitate it in immorality and infidelity. But what happened to Rome, when she became the Depository of the wealth of a conquered world, will happen to all nations, when they, by commerce or by conquest, become possessed of excessive riches; it has already happened to England, especially since our acquisition of territorial possessions in India; and it will soon happen to Scotland—It will soon be said of her—*nuper divitiæ avaritiam, et abondantes voluptates desiderum,*

desiderum, per luxum atque libidinem perecundi perdendique omnia, in vexere.

An objection has often been brought against giving the children of the poor any School Education, lest it should generate in them high notions of their own acquirements, and render them discontented with their station: I cannot accede to this opinion, it resembles in it's consequence, the cruelty of the East India Casts, by which a man and his posterity through all generations can never rise above the level of the lowest Cast in which he happens to be born. Nor can I ever adopt the principle, that the common people are to be kept in ignorance, in order to increase their veneration for their superiors: yet it appears from our Statute Book, that some notion of this kind actuated the policy of our ancestors before the Reign of Henry IV.; for, though some Schools had been erected by Alfred the Great, and a Law made by him, obliging every freeholder possessing two Hides of Land or more, to send their sons to School

School (Henry's Hist. vol. iv. p. 64.) yet it was not till the 7th year of the Reign of Henry IV. (rather above 400 years ago) "that villains, farmers and mechanics, were permitted by law to put their children to School." (Henry's Hist. vol. x. p. 128.) About a hundred years after this permission had been given to the lower Classes in England, a Law was passed in Scotland, similar to that which had been made by Alfred the Great, compelling every Baron or Freeholder of substance to put his eldest Son and Heir to School, and there to keep him till he should acquire a thorough knowledge of Latin, and afterward of the law of the land (Henry's Hist. vol. xiv. p. 93.); but it was not till after the Reformation had taken place in Scotland, and a general desire of reading the Scriptures in their native language had been excited in most reformed Countries, that an Act of Parliament was passed, establishing the Parochial Schools which now subsist in Scotland.

I will take leave of this subject with declaring,

declaring, that were my opinion asked how a Clergyman would best satisfy his own conscience, as to the proper discharge of his pastoral function, best promote the public good, best consult for the temporal and eternal welfare of his Parishioners, my answer would be—by endeavouring to implant in the minds of young persons of both sexes Religious principles, not merely as speculative principles, but as rules of life, and by exhibiting in his own conduct an uniform conformity to the principles he recommended. As to the means of effecting so important a purpose, I think they may more properly be left to your own discretion, than pointed out by me, for they will be various according to the dispositions, circumstances, and conditions of the youth and of their parents; I say of their Parents, for much of your success in this undertaking must depend upon them; and I most earnestly exhort parents, of every degree, to co-operate with their Minister in every matter respecting the religious Education of their Children; and

especially (were they of this Auditory) would I exhort Mothers to manifest their sweet maternal love, by teaching their young Offspring their prayers and their catechism, and accustoming them to repeat both to themselves. Erasmus, in his little Tract, entitled *Antibarbarorum*, says, that the safety of States depends upon three things—Upon a proper or improper Education of the Prince—upon public Preachers—and upon School-masters: and he might with equal reason have added—upon Mothers—for the care of the Mother precedes that of the School-master, and may stamp upon the *rasa tabula* of the infant mind, impressions of piety and virtue and religion, which no time or circumstance can efface.

I will now proceed to make a few observations on another subject, by no means foreign to the purpose of this meeting.—It may not perhaps be unknown to some of you, that soon after I was made a Bishop (now near twenty-seven years ago) I stated

in

in a public Letter to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, two objects which I had long thought, and still think, if properly accomplished, would be highly serviceable to the Constitution of the Country, and the honour of the Church Establishment. One of them respected the Equalization of the Revenues and of the Patronage of the Bishopricks as they severally became vacant—The other respected the providing a decent maintenance for the inferior Clergy, and requiring from them a stricter residence on their Cures than can, without such a provision, be reasonably enjoined them. These subjects had been well weighed by me before I was made a Bishop, and I saw no cause why my promotion should change my principle. I have taken no public step to prosecute the Objects I proposed, being aware that great changes are best brought about by giving men leisure to think of them; at the same time I can truly say, that I have neglected no private opportunity of recommending them to the consideration of

those in power. In April 1800, the then Archbishop of Canterbury informed me, that Mr. Pitt had signified to him an intention of speedily bringing a Bill into Parliament to enforce a better Residence of the Clergy. The next day I sent to Mr. Pitt the following Letter:

"Great George-street,
April 16, 1800.

"Dear Sir,

"On dining yesterday with the Archbishop of Canterbury, His Grace informed me, that a Bill for enforcing a better Residence of the Clergy was now in contemplation. Ignorant as I am of the provisions of the intended Bill, I may be giving you unnecessary trouble in communicating such sentiments as at present occur to me on the subject. But I trust you will pardon this my presumption, proceeding from a sense of duty; especially as I shall be in the Country when the business will be brought forward, and may have no other opportunity of suggesting any

"thing

" thing on a matter which has always
" been an object of my sincere and
" earnest wishes.

" The safety of every civil Government
" is fundamentally dependent on the
" hopes and fears of another world, which
" are entertained by it's members; and
" the safety of every christian civil Go-
" vernment is brought into the most
" imminent danger, when infidelity is
" making a rapid progress in the minds
" of the People. This I apprehend is
" the state of danger in which Great
" Britain (to say nothing of Ireland) now
" stands. It may be difficult to find a
" full remedy for this evil, but the resi-
" dence of a respectable Clergyman in
" every parish and hamlet in which there
" is a place of established worship, ap-
" pears to me to be more fitted than any
" other for that purpose.

" I do not wish a Bill respecting resi-
" dence to have any violent retrospect
" as to the present Pluralists; they, per-
" haps, ought to remain subject only to

" the existing laws, for it would bring " ruin on many individuals who are now " married and settled in the world, if " they were compelled to change their " situations. But I see no individual " hardship and much public good which " would attend a new law, suffering (after " it had passed) no man to hold two " Benefices of any kind. As, however, " there are many Benefices utterly inade- " quate to the affording even a bare " maintenance to an unmarried Clergy- " man, a law abolishing *in futuro* all " pluralities, ought to be accompanied " with another, making a decent provision " for every resident Minister.

" An hundred pounds a year ought to " be the very least stipend annexed " to any benefice, and, such sum being " annexed, Service twice every Sunday " should be required in all. Benefices " at one hundred a year should re- " main, I think, as they are; unless it " should be judged expedient, on a " vacancy, to take the first fruits on a

" real

" real valuation, constituting thereby " a fund towards augmenting Benefices " under an hundred to that sum.

" Houses of Residence for the Clergy " should be bought or built at the pub- " lic expense, or by the Governors of " Queen Anne's Bounty, for Livings under " an hundred pounds a year.

" The number of Livings under an hun- " dred a year, their respective values, and " the state of the Parsonage Houses, " should be accurately ascertained and " laid before Parliament, in order that " the additional public burden attending " the giving a decent maintenance to the " Clergy might be known: it would, I " am persuaded, whatever it's magnitude " might be, meet with no opposition " from the judicious part of the Com- " munity. The Bishops would be able " to make, if required, this return to " Parliament by means of their Officers.

" Livings held in commendam, or an- " nexed without commendam to Bishop- " ricks, to Headships and Professorships

" in the Universities, to Public Schools, &c.
" should be exempted from the operation
" of this law, as the residence of their
" possessors cannot be expected.

" The greatest part of the Benefices
" under an hundred a year are in the
" patronage of Lay Impropriators; many
" of these Impropriators would, I doubt
" not, be moved by a sense of Piety, and
" a regard for public safety, to contribute
" largely towards rendering the income of
" each Place of Worship in their patron-
" age not less than the sum I have
" mentioned.

" I cannot at present ascertain the
" number of Livings in the patronage
" of the Universities and their respective
" Colleges, in that of Deans and Chapters,
" of Hospitals, Corporations, &c.; perhaps
" they may amount to above a thousand.
" But let the number be what it may,
" would it be an unreasonable thing to
" expect, that these several bodies should
" make up from their own revenues every
" living in their patronage to a stipend

" of

"of 100*l.*? The property of these "Corporations has been greatly increased "within the last forty years, whilst their "poor Vicarages, &c. have remained "nearly in *statu quo.*

"In Denmark, and I believe in Scot-"land and other Protestant Countries, "(in Catholic Countries non-residence is "scarcely heard of) the stipends of their "Clergy are not paid in full, unless they "reside the whole year. What defalcation "of income might be proper to be exacted "on a partial absence of a Minister from "his Living, is a question for the wisdom "of the Legislature to determine; but "some defalcation, I think, ought to be "made, unless in cases of sickness or "other emergencies to be allowed of by "the Bishop of the Diocese.

"If any thing is attempted, I wish the "axe to be laid to the root of the evil. "Sectaries are every where increasing, "and some of them are thought to mingle "political with religious Opinions. Now, "though all men ought to be allowed the

"liberty

"liberty of worshipping God according "to their conscience, yet serious per- "sons would be glad to see a stop put "to the miserable effusions of enthusiastic "ignorance. The prudent zeal of a resi- "dent Clergyman in watching over his "flock, would be more efficacious to this "purpose than a whole code of penal "Laws.

"I will not trespass on your time by "entering into a longer detail, well know- "ing the facility with which your mind "is able to fill up the outline of any plan "which you may deem worthy of con- "sideration.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"*R. Landaff.*"

To this Letter Mr. Pitt sent the following Letter, dated

"Downing-street,

"My dear Lord, April 17, 1800.

"I RETURN your Lordship many thanks "for your Letter of yesterday, in which "you have the goodness to communicate

"to

"to me many important suggestions on "the subject of a Plan for enforcing a "better Residence of the Clergy: I will, "with your permission, send you a copy of "the plan which has been prepared, and "I am happy to observe, that in many "essential points it will be found very "conformable to the sentiments which you "have expressed. On the only points in "which it differs, I should be extremely "glad to have an opportunity of con-"versing with you, before you leave "Town.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"*W. Pitt.*"

I replied instantly to this note, that I would wait upon Mr. Pitt at any time he would appoint before Tuesday next, when I proposed to leave London. He was taken ill, and I did not see him; but as I came out of the House of Lords on Monday evening, Lord Grenville spoke to me on the subject. The substance of my advice to Lord Grenville is contained in the following Letter to Mr. Pitt:

"Dear

"Great George-street.
"Dear Sir, April 22, 1808.

"LORD GRENVILLE told me yesterday, as I was coming out of the House of Lords, that you had communicated to him the Letter which I had the honour to address to you, relative to the Bill for promoting the residence of the Clergy. Apprehending that I should not have an opportunity, from the pressure of the important business (Union with Ireland) in which you are now engaged, of seeing you before I left Town (and I am now stepping into my Coach for that purpose) I desired him to communicate to you a few things which occurred to me at the moment, and which I now put on paper, lest they should have escaped his recollection.

"Would it be improper to put off the matter to another Session? Before that time, every thing might be well considered, and the requisite information

"obtained.

" obtained. It is a very ticklish business " to meddle with the Church; for, setting " aside the consideration of the High " and Low Church Principles, which are " dormant but not dead in this Kingdom, " there are many jarring lay and clerical " Interests to be reconciled, before any " great public good can be expected " from an attempt to reform the Church " in any degree.

" The Bishops, I think, should be " authorized, as was done in the begin- " ning of Queen Anne's reign, to issue " a Commission (I may err as to the " term, having no books here) requiring, " where necessary, the testimony on " oath, of the Clergy and others, as to " the Values at present, of all the Livings " which were then discharged from the pay- " ment of first fruits and tenths, as being " under fifty pounds a year; and also " of all Benefices, which, being of small " value, never were in Charge in their " respective Dioceses. Many of these " livings, which were, in the time of Queen " Anne,

"Anne, discharged from the payment "of first fruits and tenths, as being under "fifty pounds a year, and some of those "which never were charged with that "payment, are now worth 100*l.* a year "or more.

"If a more complete knowledge is "wished for, and I own I think it would "be desirable to have it, not only for the "reason hinted at in my former Letter, "but to correct the errors of many, who "over-estimate the Church Endowment, "a return to Parliament, or to the King "in Council, of all Benefices with cure of "souls, might be ordered; and the reason "assigned for this, so as not to excite "an alarm, might be—that Government "wished to know the actual value of all "the small Livings, previous to the con-"sideration of making a better provision "for a resident Clergy. The inquiry as "to the Livings above fifty pounds a year "in Queen Anne's time, is certainly not "improper to be made now. For many "of these Livings, being Vicarages, are

"little

" little increased since that time, though " the expense of living is tripled at the " least.

" There are in many Dioceses con- " tiguous livings, the values of which, " if united, would make a decent pro- " vision for a Clergyman residing strictly " on one of them, and doing full duty, " morning and evening alternately (once " every Sunday) in each of them. An " union of this kind is not so good in " some respects, as a separate provision for " two resident Clergymen ; but it is better " in another, for it will render the public " burden which must be imposed, if " any thing essential is done, less con- " siderable.

" I shall be happy to be of any use " to you in this business ; if properly ac- " complished, it will do you as much " honour with Posterity as the Irish Union " will do. They are both of them great " measures ; they will both of them be " of essential use to the present gene- " ration. But a Statesman looks far

" beyond

"beyond the present moment, and "Posterity is the best judge of his "merit." "I am, &c.

"*R. Landaff.*"

I had no further intercourse with either Mr. Pitt or Lord Grenville on the business of the Clergy Residence. Their intended Bill was then laid aside, probably from their finding that they had not sufficiently investigated the matter; and in March 1801 they both went out of Office.

In the Session of 1802, I made a proposal to the Archbishop of Canterbury in the first place, and afterwards to the Bishops collectively assembled at Lambeth—That, thinking it consistent with the Duty and Dignity of the Bishops to undertake the protection of the Clergy, against malicious prosecutions for Non-residence, a Motion should be made in the House of Lords for the appointment of a Committee, consisting of six Spiritual and six Temporal Lords, to take into consideration the laws respecting the residence and the maintenance

tenance of the Clergy, and to make a report to the House as the Basis of a future Bill.—I added, that I was far from wishing to appear forward in the business; but that if no other Bishop would do it, I was ready (with their concurrence and with that of the Minister) to make and support the motion.

I joined the consideration of the maintenance with that of the residence of the Clergy, for it appeared to me an ὑστερον πρoτερον to compel a residence till a subsistence had been provided. My proposal was not adopted, and the Non-residence Act, sufficiently known to you all, was passed.

Having had, in the course of the last year, some reason to believe that the maintenance as well as the residence of the parochial Clergy was again coming under the deliberation of Government, I transmitted in August last a copy of the Letter to Mr. Pitt, which I have just read to you, to Lord Hawkesbury, thinking that it might be of some use to him, and which

he desired to keep: and in December last I wrote to him the following Letter:

"Calgarth Park,
"My Lord, 18th Dec. 1808.

"THOUGH I have, for several years, "lived a retired, rather than a public life, "indifferent to the coalitions of Parties, "rather than attached to any of them; "yet have I never been indifferent to the "public welfare, or inattentive (as occa- "sion offered) to the means of promoting "it either in Church or State. An occa- "sion now prompts me to trouble your "Lordship with a suggestion or two on "a weighty subject.

"The account of the number of Livings "in England and Wales, not exceeding "in value 150*l.* a year, which, at your "Lordship's instance, the Bishops are now "preparing to lay before the Governors "of Queen Anne's Bounty, has excited a "general expectation that it is in the "contemplation of Government to aug- "ment such livings to that sum. If this

"expectation

" expectation is well founded, I submit to
" your consideration the utility and the
" practicability of making such augmen-
" tation instrumental in improving what
" some have loudly called for—the educa-
" tion of the children of the lower classes.
" My opinion indeed on that subject,
" does not extend so far as that of some
" others, perhaps not so far as that of your
" Lordship.

" If the small Livings were augmented
" to 100*l.* a year, and no man in future
" (for the arrangement should have no
" retrospect so as to injure any present
" possessor) were permitted to hold two
" of them, and an additional 50*l.* a year
" were given as a Stipend to such Incum-
" bents as would teach Schools, in such
" parishes and chapelries where Schools
" were wanted, I think few of them would
" decline availing themselves of an oppor-
" tunity of eking out a scanty income, by
" an occupation so correspondent to their
" pastoral function; for surely there can
" be no impropriety in the Minister of a

" Parish becoming the Schoolmaster of
" his young Parishioners.—But if some-
" thing of this kind should be thought of,
" would it not admit a deliberation whe-
" ther the teaching should be above three
" days in the week, the other three being
" left unengaged, not only for the conveni-
" ence of the Clergyman, but for that of the
" parents of the Children who want their as-
" sistance, small as the assistance of young
" children may seem, in their domestic
" concerns and agricultural operations.

" If it is intended to augment all the
" small Livings to 150*l.* a year, would it
" not be proper to begin with the small
" Livings in the Patronage of the Crown.
" I consider this part (about a tenth of the
" whole) as a kind of public patronage,
" not liable to be either bought or sold, and
" open to the expectation of every man
" brought up to the Church. Now as
" every man must contribute in one way
" or other to the public purse, from
" which the augmentation of small Livings
" (if any is made) must be derived, it
" seems

" seems to me reasonable that the aug-
" mentation of the Crown Livings should
" be first thought of.

" Lay Corporations and lay Individuals
" possess the patronage of above seven
" parts out of ten, of all the livings in
" England and Wales. I do not mention
" this proportion as mathematically accu-
" rate, but it is sufficiently so for the in-
" ference which I mean to draw from the
" mention of it. Is there either injustice
" or hardship in expecting that these lay
" Patrons should lighten the public
" burden by their contributions to the
" augmentation of their own small livings?
" Some may think that Impropriators
" should be compelled to make this con-
" tribution, and the arguments which may
" be urged on this point are far from being
" without weight; but I do not like the
" reviving the obsolete claims, or prosecut-
" ing the doubtful rights of the Church;
" but surely they may be induced to
" come forward, from a sense of their own
" interest, as well as from a sense of piety.
" The value of the lay patronage will in

" some thousands of instances be doubled
" by the augmentation, and individuals
" may by a sale of their patronage im-
" mediately convert the public munificence
" into their private profit.

" I can form but an uncertain conjec-
" ture of the sum which will be wanted
" for the augmentation of the small
" livings to 150*l.* a year; but whether it
" may exceed or fall short of half a
" million, it will be so large a sum, that
" if it is given under the restriction
" of being laid out in land, a reason-
" able apprehension may be raised of
" too much land coming into Mortmain.

" I heartily beg your Lordship's pardon
" for this long intrusion on your time: I
" have made it with reluctance, for I have
" no wish to pry into the intentions of
" Government, no curiosity to gratify; and
" no one can be more sensible than I am,
" how incessantly your time is and must
" be occupied in matters of State,
" peculiarly critical and important to the
" safety of the Country.

" I have the honour to be, &c.

" *R. L.*"

It is not unnatural, Reverend Brethren, for a Bishop to wish for the esteem of the Clergy of his Diocese; and I own an ambition to possess yours has been my principal motive for making the detail with which I have now troubled you. I am aware that *Episcopam γα πιρι σιαυτε balbutientem attica fastidiunt aures*; yet I could not repress my anxiety to shew you, that though I have no place of residence amongst you, nor a Church Income sufficient to enable me to attend, every year, my Parliamentary duty, yet have I never slept on my post, or neglected any fair opportunity of promoting that change in the Church Establishment, which I had not recommended, many years ago, without due consideration, and which the Legislature, I hope, will now finally accomplish. It is a change essential to the comfort and respectability of the greatest part of the parochial Clergy, and their respectability is essential to the best interests of religion; and he must be a narrow-minded, short-sighted Statesman, who does not see and acknowledge, that national

Morality, proceeding from religious principle, is essential to the peace, the prosperity, the permanency, of this and of every other Christian Country. A good beginning of this business has been lately made in both Houses of Parliament; but if the great expenses of the unfortunate War, in which we have been so long engaged, should hinder the Legislature from, at present, fully accomplishing the object under consideration, it will be our duty to rest contented till a more favourable opportunity presents itself, and to rely with confidence, on this persuasion, that there is not perhaps a single Individual in either House of Parliament, who is not penetrated with a sincere concern for the hardships of the inferior Clergy, and heartily disposed to relieve them.

R. Landaff.

Landaff, June 21, 1809.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN JUNE 1802.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

TO THE

REVEREND THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

THIS

CHARGE,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS,

WITH GREAT RESPECT, INSCRIBED

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT,

R. LANDAFF.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN JUNE

1802.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

BEFORE I trouble you with my sentiments relative to other matters, I think it not improper to advert to two questions which have, of late years, been much agitated in France, and in other parts of the Continent; especially as they have attracted the consideration of certain individuals amongst ourselves. They appear to me to be questions of great importance, inasmuch as wrong conclusions concerning them directly tend to the subversion of all church establishments, and eventually to the endangering the tranquillity of all civil societies.

The

The first question, when fairly stated, is this: May not the security of life, liberty, and property, the great end for the attainment of which men enter into civil society, be as effectually promoted by the energy of civil laws, without the aid of any religion, as with it? That *Frederic* the Great, that *Helvetius*, *Voltaire*, and other men of eminent abilities, should have ever entertained the discussion of such a question, excites my astonishment, and I am still more surprised, that any of them should have determined it in the affirmative. Their conduct, in this particular, is a strong proof, that the most splendid talents do not secure their possessors from making the most perverse use of them. For what can be a greater perversion of the faculty of reasoning, than to maintain, that the more forcibly men are restrained by their fears from the commission of crimes, the more crimes they will commit? This conclusion, absurd as you must esteem it, is a legitimate inference from the whole of their argumentation.

Men

Men are restrained from the commission of crimes, by the fear of the punishment denounced by civil laws. Now a man may be guilty of a thousand secret villanies, and escape the cognizance, and of a thousand open ones, and elude the vigilance, of these laws. These laws, moreover, extend not their jurisdiction to what moralists have called—the duties of imperfect obligation. The municipal laws of every country, say to every individual in it, Thou shalt do no injury to any one; and this they say with great authority, because they annex punishment to the transgression of their injunctions: but they speak with no authority at all, when they say, Thou shalt do good to every one. They restrain men from committing murder, theft, and robbery; but they have no power of compelling men to be grateful, humane, merciful. This confined agency of human law in support of virtue, is beautifully expressed by *Seneca:—Quam angusta innocentia est ad legem bonum esse? Quanto latius officiorum patet*

patet quam juris regula? quam multa pietas, humanitas, liberalitas, justitia, fides exigunt, quæ omnia extra publicas tabulas sunt? Civil laws too, it is material to observe, are quite incapable of reaching the great source of all virtues and all vices, of all crimes and all duties, the thoughts of the heart.

Now to maintain, that religion can add no strength to the impotence, no extent to the limitation, no remedy to the incapacity of civil laws, what is it but to support a paradox at the expense of truth; what, but to sacrifice common sense to the vanity of being thought singular; what, but with reasoning to run mad?

But as these men and their admirers affect to be esteemed the great Philosophers of modern times, suffer me to recal to your recollection, the judgment of one really great Philosopher of antiquity—of *Cicero*—who, in speaking from the mere light of nature, of the existence and moral government of the gods, says—

Utiles

Utiles autem esse opiniones has quis neget, cum intelligat quam multa firmentur jure-jurando; quantæ salutis sint fœderum religiones; quam multos divini supplicii metus a scelere revocarit; quamque sancta sit societas civium inter ipsos, diis immortalibus interpositis tum judicibus tum testibus?

Were it necessary, this sentiment of *Cicero* might be corroborated by quotations from the writings of *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Plutarch*, of all the most eminent sages of Greece and Rome, who saw and acknowledged even their religion to be of the greatest utility to civil states, to be the cement, as one of them says, of all society, the principal prop of all legislation. But I will not affront your wisdom, nor outrage the piety of your principles, by adding another word in refutation of the King of Prussia's assertion, *Que la religion n'est pas nécessaire pour la societé civile.*

Assuming then, as sufficiently proved by the experience of ages, and the consent of the most enlightened men in all countries,

countries, that religion is necessary for the support of civil society; and admitting, as needing no proof, that the Christian religion is better fitted than any other for the attainment of that end; a second question presents itself, concerning the best mode of applying that religion to the production of the greatest quantity of virtue in a Christian society. This question may be thus expressed: Will the greatest moral benefit be produced to a Christian society with or without a civil establishment of the Christian religion? by the intervention of a regular ministry, appointed by learned and discreet men, and paid by the state, or by leaving every man at liberty to select and reward a physician for his soul, as he does one for his body?

Why should we waste time in discussing this question? since this is now no longer a question, even in France. That country, instructed by it's sufferings, has at length extricated itself from the sophistry of it's philosophers, and concurred with every other

other country in Europe, in acknowledging the utility not only of a religion, but of an established religion. France has done more; she has, if we are rightly informed, gone beyond every European state in liberality; and, as appears to me, in sound policy; inasmuch as she has undertaken, not only to pay the Catholic ministers of the majority of the people, but the Protestant ministers also of certain minorities of the people, who cannot in conscience unite in religious worship with the majority.

But that I may not appear wholly to decline an inquiry, which the enemies of church establishments say we dare not enter into, I will examine, as briefly as possible, without noticing the abusive declamation of ignorant men, what grave and serious men have advanced in opposition to all civil establishments of the Christian religion. Their principal argument is taken from the state of the Christian church during the three first centuries. This argument (which is as old as

St. *Jerome*, who says, *postquam Christi Ecclesia ad christianos principes venit, potentia quidem et divitiis major, sed virtutibus minor facta est)* when compressed and brought into form, stands thus:

During the three first centuries there was no civil establishment of the Christian religion:

But during the three first centuries, Christians were more exemplary in their moral conduct than they have ever been since the civil establishment of religion took place:

Therefore, the civil establishment of the Christian religion has been unfavourable to the production of Christian morality.

I do not mean rashly to affirm that there is no truth in any of these three propositions; but I humbly think that none of them ought to be admitted in the latitude contended for.—To begin with the first of them.

It is granted that there was not, strictly speaking, any civil establishment of the Christian religion before the time of *Constantine:*

Constantine: yet there was from the time of the *Apostles* to that of *Constantine*, something very much resembling, if not tantamount to an establishment.

The two main pillars by which a church establishment is supported, are; the regular maintenance, at the public expense, of those who minister at the altar; and the regular designation of fit men to that ministration.

Now though the Church had not, at first, any provision made for the support of it's ministers, out of the public funds of the State, yet was it never destitute of the means of affording them a regular maintenance. They were maintained out of the common stock of the Church. And that stock was so abundant, that it was sufficient for the maintenance of the Christian poor, as well as for the support of Christian ministers, of every denomination. That stock was at first formed, and always amply replenished, by the voluntary donations of the faithful.

The governors of the primitive church

relied, for a supply of it's wants, on the providence of God opening the hearts and enlarging the sources of individual charity, just as mariners in the Pacific Ocean have trusted for a supply of water, in certain latitudes, to the rains which there at particular seasons fall from heaven: the sources of both supplies were uncertain, yet they never failed.

The enemies of religion have referred to improper motives, this extraordinary liberality of the primitive Christians in supporting their ministers. It is not necessary in this place to refute their misrepresentation, since we are concerned only with the fact, and that cannot be denied.

As to a regular designation of fit men to the Christian ministry, it is a circumstance so established by church history, from the days of the Apostles downwards, that no one can question it with any appearance of reason.

I do not here inquire whether men were, during the apostolic age, or soon after

after it, appointed to the sacred office of feeding the flock of Christ, precisely as they are now appointed, either by the Church of England, or by the Church of Scotland, or by any other church—that is a point not necessary now to be entered upon; because all that is here contended for, is allowed on all hands, that unfit persons did not of themselves generally assume that office; they were appointed to it in a solemn manner; hands were not suddenly laid on Christian teachers; but, after a due examination had been made into their character and ability, they were authorized to become Pastors in the Church of Christ.

It may be argued, indeed, that after the canon of the New Testament was settled, and the several parts of it were translated into the language of any country, there would be no occasion in that country for public teachers of the Christian religion, since each man might instruct himself in every thing necessary to be done and believed. It is undoubtedly

every man's duty to consider the Scriptures alone as his rule of faith; yet it ought to be remembered, that the bulk of mankind in every country, are unable to read their Bible. Knowledge of every kind is more generally diffused through Great Britain than in any other Christian country, yet we meet with numbers in every town and village in the Kingdom, who cannot read the Scriptures, and with many more in every part of Christendom, who are unable to understand them so fully, as they might be made to do by proper explications of difficult passages.

What if it should be granted that, after the death of those who had been ordained by the Apostles, the people elected their ministers? yet, it cannot be granted, that no examination was made into the abilities of those ministers whom the people appointed.

We are, on the contrary, assured from history, that the youth destined to the holy ministry, every where received an education suitable to the importance of the

the office they were to undertake. "Saint John erected a school of this kind at Ephesus, and one of the same sort was founded by Polycarp at Smyrna. But none of these were in a greater repute than that which was established at Alexandria, which was commonly called the Catechetical School, and is generally supposed to have been erected by Saint Mark."

There were indeed, even in the Apostolic Church, as there are in our own, *persons who had itching ears, who would not endure the sound teaching of their ordinary pastors,* but *who heaped to themselves teachers, according to their own desires*; but this practice was not common, and was clearly disapproved of by Saint Paul.

The second proposition, asserting the superiority of the primitive Christians over those of succeeding ages in Christian morality, is a proposition respecting a matter of fact, which it is extremely difficult to establish. The virtues and vices of men in different ages and countries, cannot be

accurately compared together, since they differ from each other not only in degree but in kind. We may allow all praise to the Christians of the three first centuries, in maintaining their principles at the hazard of their lives, and in their benevolent treatment of each other, without allowing them to have excelled the Christians of all after-ages, in all other virtues, or even in these, had similar circumstances, in an established Church, called upon it's members for equal manifestations of fortitude and philanthropy. We have in our age, and before our eyes, an illustrious instance of many thousand ministers of an established church, who either laid down their lives in France, or abandoned their country, and sacrificed all their earthly comforts to their conscience: and there never was a more glorious example of that benignity which Christianity inspires, than in the treatment which these unfortunate men received from the clergy and laity amongst ourselves. These are instances, in established churches, of constancy on

the one hand, and of Christian benevolence on the other, which would have done honour to the most distinguished Christians of the first centuries.

But though we should admit (which need not be done) that there was nothing equivalent to an establishment of Christianity during the three first centuries; and though we should further admit, that the Christians, during that period, were more virtuous than they have ever been since; yet the third proposition, concluding that a civil establishment of religion is unfavourable to the production of Christian morality, need not be admitted, if other probable causes can be assigned for the supposed superiority of the primitive Christians in their moral conduct.—Now there are two causes which appear to me to be of weight in this matter: The first Christians were under persecution; and it is a principle universally admitted, that men are circumspect in their conduct, in proportion to the danger they apprehend from being otherwise.

The

The miracles, moreover, of our Saviour and his Apostles, and the blood of martyrs shed in attestation of the truth of the Gospel, were then recent events; and we all know the power of recent events in exciting human belief, and the power of belief in producing correspondent action. This may be granted, without it's being necessary for us to grant (what some have contended for) that the authority of the testimony on which the Christian religion is founded is lessened by length of time. But I can only touch upon these points in this place, as there are other matters to which I wish to call your attention.

It is generally asserted and believed, that, of late years, there has been a great increase in the number of those who have withdrawn themselves from the Established Church—some, from a disapprobation of its doctrines as delivered in it's Articles and Liturgy; some, from a dislike of the manner in which these doctrines are expounded by it's ministers; some, from an objection to it's discipline and mode of worship;

worship; some, from an aversion to all ecclesiastical establishments; and many, probably, from less ostensible motives. But let the reasons, or the pretences for this separation, be what they may, it is a circumstance, in which the clergy cannot think themselves wholly unconcerned. Each serious minister of a parish cannot but say to himself, Has the flock committed to my care strayed from the fold through my fault? Have I set them, in word or deed, a bad example? Have they taken offence at my apparent or real want of zeal for their spiritual welfare? Have I contented myself with a cold and perfunctory performance of my public duties, supposing all my pastoral duties to be included in them? I trust, Brethren, that every one to whom the cure of souls is committed, frequently probes his conscience by these searching questions. And if his conscience does not witness against him, I see no reason why he should be afflicted at what may have happened. For churches may be deserted from the capri-

capriciousness of the people, as well as from the pastor's negligence.

The equity, moderation, charity, and wisdom of the Church of England, is in nothing more laudable and conspicuous than in this: that she compels no man to come within her pale, nor thunders out, anathema, against any one who leaves it. Those who, in leaving us, join themselves to some other denomination of Christians, do it, we sincerely hope, not from a silly desire of novelty, nor from a malicious propensity to vex and vilify their appointed minister, nor from a froward disposition to raise unprofitable schisms in the Church, or dangerous factions in the State. But let their motive be what it may, whilst they avoid disturbing the public peace by transgressing the laws of the community, they are answerable for their conduct to God and not to man.

We may think Papists, Presbyterians, Independents, Methodists, and others, to be in an error with respect to doctrines or forms of worship—they may all and each of

of them think the same of us: and as there is is no Apostle upon earth to decide who is in the right, such a diversity of opinion will engender irritating contentions, unless it be buried at once in mutual charity and forbearance.

If those who leave us plead conscience for their separation, the Searcher of Hearts alone can certainly know whether their plea be hypocritical or sincere, whether their conscience be innocently dubious, or culpably scrupulous. When, in truth, the religious opinions of sectaries are combined with political principles and chimerical speculations, evidently tending, like those of the German Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, to the subversion of all establishments in Church and State, to the utter destruction of the peace and disruption of the bonds of civil society, it becomes the duty of the magistrate to restrain their insanity.

This evil of separation (for I cannot but esteem it an evil) arises chiefly from the abuse of that religious liberty which we,

in

in this country, happily enjoy; and which no wise man will wish to see abolished or abridged, because a few persons do not properly estimate it's worth, or use it as they ought.

A prudent zeal in the performance of your pastoral duties, accompanied with kindness and condescension towards those who have forsaken you, will be more efficacious in bringing them back to your communion, than all the penal laws which could be enacted or enforced. The Apostle gives us excellent advice on this head, when he says, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;" for we are then most apt to please ourselves when we judge other men, and reproach them for not thinking as we think. It is our duty, no doubt, to endeavour to detect the artifices of wicked teachers, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish ones, and to refute the calumnies of malicious men: and if this is done, when opportunity offers, discreetly and charitably, from a sense of ministerial

ministerial duty rather than from a conceit of self-importance, we may reasonably hope that our endeavours will be attended with success. There are some men, it must be confessed, of such brutal tempers, that no courtesy can subdue their malignity; like the swine in the Gospel they will trample your pearls, they will scorn your advice, contemn your admonitions, ridicule your labours, and bring against you railing accusations for your attempts to reform them. But such men are not many, nor of much estimation in any parish, when compared with the number and worth of those who will be grateful for the attention of a faithful minister, who shews that he has their eternal welfare and nothing else at heart in the advice which he gives them. Let every one of us shew himself *a pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us.*

But you will say to me, how is it possible

possible that a minister can become an example to his flock *in discourse, in behaviour, in love, in faith, in purity,* when he does not live amongst them? Your observation is just. The absence of the shepherd gives opportunities for thieves and wolves to break into the fold. "Here," says Barrow, "a fanatical enthusiast will snap them, there a profane libertine will worry them, there again a desperate atheist will tear and devour them."

How is this mischief to be avoided? He who has thought but superficially on the subject, will answer at once,—Take away Pluralities, and compel every beneficed clergyman to reside on his cure. No one can more sincerely wish than I do, that this were practicable, for no one can be more fully persuaded than I am that the best consequences, moral and political, would attend the residence of a clergyman in every parish in the kingdom. There is one supposition, indeed, on which the absence of a clergyman would be better than his residence in his parish, but it is a sup-

a supposition which you will not, without feeling some indignation, suffer me to make; it is the supposition of a clergyman setting a bad example to his flock. An impious, sensual, selfish, immoral, unchristian clergyman, is a monster in the church of Christ; like monsters in the natural world, I hope and believe that he is rarely met with in this kingdom, and I pray God that he may never be met with in this Diocese. Setting aside this supposition (which, strange as it may seem, was urged by one of the Fathers at the council of Trent against the residence of bishops being enforced) I know nothing more likely to baffle the seditious designs of bad men against the State, and to promote sobriety of manners, and religious considerations, among persons of all ranks, than the residence of the clergy.

Riches, whether acquired by conquest or by commerce, have ultimately brought on the ruin of every nation which possessed them, and they will bring on the ruin of this; partly by inviting the

avarice of foreign enemies, but principally by corrupting the morals, and debasing the manners of its inhabitants. *Desinit esse remedio locus ubi quæ fuerant vitia mores sunt*; and to that state we are hastening. This contagion will never be eradicated whilst the *mali fomes* subsists; but it's malignity may be abated, and it's progress retarded, by the influence of the Christian religion on the minds of individuals. This influence can by no other mean be rendered so powerful and extensive in it's operation, as by the residence of a well educated and respectable clergyman, in every parish or hamlet where there is a place of established worship.

I have, through life, considered the making a proper provision for the inferior clergy as a matter of high political importance; and the time, I hope, is at length come, when the Legislature will be disposed to lend it's aid to the accomplishing so great a purpose. The interests of the Church of England are, to every enlightened statesman, the interests of

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the State itself. The safety of the community requires that the people be kept in due subordination, and in obedience to the laws; that they be secured from revolutionary infection; and that men of all ranks be preserved, as much as may be, from that laxity of religious principle, and consequent licentiousness of morals, which precedes, accompanies, and produces, as all history informs us, the dissolution of governments. Every man of sense and property in the kingdom will acknowledge the truth of this observation, and will acknowledge also, that a resident clergy, properly provided for, would be essentially useful for this end.

How this provision can be made, need not, on this occasion, become the subject of inquiry; let the disposition to make it be once ascertained, and more ways than one may be found out by which it may be gradually effected, without injuring any individual, without disturbing the present possessors of pluralities, without creating the least embarrassment

to the government of the country. But to enforce the residence of the Clergy, without giving them, in a thousand, in many thousand instances, a competence to live on, or an house to put their heads in, is, in my mind, beginning the business at the wrong end. Were I called upon for my opinion on this great point, I should feel no hesitation whatever in saying to our own and to every state in Christendom—Make a proper provision for your clergy; you cannot expend the public wealth for a better purpose; and, that provision being made, see that all of them of every rank do the duty, for the performance of which they are all maintained by the State.

An enemy to the church establishment, or even a friend to it, who happens to be unacquainted with the extent of it's revenue, will be apt to say—Why talk of expending the public treasure in providing for the parochial clergy; is not the church rich enough to make that provision from it's own funds? I answer, No.

I may

I may be mistaken in this judgment, for there are no sufficient *data* from which the revenue of the church can be accurately calculated; but it is my opinion, that the whole revenue of the church of England is inadequate to the decent maintenance of all it's ministers, even if it were equally divided among them; a division which neither could be effected without doing injustice to lay-patrons, nor which ought to be effected if it could. I am no friend to an equality of order among the ministers of the church, nor to an equality of provision for the parochial clergy, since all the advantages of an establishment may be obtained without such equality, and many disadvantages would attend it.

But what is to be understood by the terms "decent maintenance—proper provision?" The answer to this question will vary with circumstances. In a country where celibacy is enjoined the clergy, a less sum may be a proper provision than in one where they are allowed to marry—

in a cheap country than in a dear one —among a poor people than a rich one. But whenever this great question, which is connected with the safety of a great nation, shall become the subject of public investigation, we may safely trust it's decision to the wisdom and liberality of the two Houses of Parliament, without our presuming to anticipate their determination by a sordid calculation of pounds shillings and pence, by a detailed and meagre estimate of the least possible sum, on which a clergyman, married or single, can subsist.

No friend to the church of England, no serious-minded Christian, would wish to see the clergy enabled to emulate the nobles and the great gentry of the land in the ostentation of riches; in voluptuous indulgences; in dissipated modes of living: and I am persuaded that the clergy, in general, would think it their duty, if they were enabled, not to be inclined to do it: but all must wish to see them rising, in the means of living, above

above the level of the lowest of the people. It is true, that solid learning, great knowledge of the Scriptures, a prudent zeal in preaching the word of God, and a life correspondent, as much as human infirmity will admit, to christian perfection, will exempt the poorest of the clergy from that ridicule to which their poverty exposes them. With these qualifications the most hardened sinners will be ashamed to contemn them, and all men of worth will reverence and admire them; yet to these qualifications, rare and of difficult attainment as they are, a decent competence will add lustre and weight.

You will naturally expect from me, on this occasion, some account of a Bill lately introduced into the House of Commons, relative to the clergy, by a gentleman of unquestioned ability, integrity, and attachment to the church of England. This Bill had two objects in view: the first was, to free the clergy from certain unreasonable penalties and dis-

abilities to which they were exposed, by Acts of Parliament passed in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth: the second was, to enforce their residence on their cures. By the first, a kind and sufficient protection was afforded to the clergy; by the second, a due regard was shewn (as far as the Bill extended) to the public good; and they both together suggested a well-grounded confidence, that, when the state of the church shall be taken more fully into consideration, in order to apply not a palliative but a radical remedy to an inveterate disease, the clergy as a body will have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope, from the liberality of the Legislature, as far as a paramount regard to the public weal can permit.

By this Bill a considerable degree of power was intended to have been intrusted to the bishops, respecting the granting of licences for non-residence in certain cases which were enumerated, and in other cases with the concurrence of the archbishop

archbishop of the province. Every one must see that such cases may arise, and it certainly is expedient that such a power should be lodged somewhere, and I must profess that I do not see in whom such a power could be with so much propriety vested, as in the bishop of the diocese wherein the case may occur. Some apprehension seems to have been excited lest this power, were it given to the bishops, should be used by them to improper purposes. The possibility of the abuse of all power is a circumstance which cannot be denied, but I cannot think that in this case there is any probability of it. For my own part, I should consider (and I believe most of my brethren would consider it in the same way) such power as a burden which it was my duty to sustain, but from the pressure of which, could the end be otherwise attained, I should most willingly be exempted. The exercise of discretionary discipline is a painful task, (unless when it is accompanied with anger and ill-will, and

and then it ought not to be exercised at all) but it is a task which must be performed by some person or other in every profession; and in the present instance I trust there is every reason to believe (should such a power be given to the bishops) that it will be exercised with integrity and firmness, united with condescension and humanity. A bishop and his clergy having but one and the same end in view—the spiritual welfare of the people committed to their care—ought, on all occasions, to be guided by a common will. Such an harmony of sentiment is of the essence of friendship; but as jarring interests and prejudices often in private life tear asunder the closest bonds of friendship, so it may happen between men engaged in public concerns, whose designs are the same. That this may never happen between any of the clergy of this Diocese (with whom I have uninterruptedly lived on friendly terms for twenty years) and myself, I would recommend to their consideration

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and my own that admirable law of friendship, which every honest man must approve, as laid down by Cicero: *Hæc igitur lex in amicitia sanciatur, ut nec rogemus res turpes nec faciamus rogati.* In conformity to this law, the clergy, I hope, will think it becomes them never to make improper applications for licences of non-residence; and I am certain it will become me, whatever uneasiness I may feel in the refusal, not to grant them if made.

A few things more remain to be mentioned. About fourteen years ago I gave a copy of a small tract, entitled, "An Address to Young Persons after Confirmation," to every one whom I at that time confirmed. That tract has since then been published, and may be purchased, at a trifling expense, by those who think it may be of use to themselves, to their children, servants, or other connexions. Many of those, to whom I then gave that token of my regard, are now settled in the world and become parents;

parents; if any of them are present in this assembly, they will permit me to exhort them to labour to instil into the minds of their offspring, those principles of piety, of self-government, and of non-conformity to the vicious practices of the world, which it was my wish to instil into their own. I composed that Address with the express design of co-operating with the clergy of my diocese in saving the souls of men; I knew it was my duty, *who am taken from you in presence not in heart*, to endeavour to sow the good seed, and to pray God to give the increase; and I indulged a pleasing hope that, long after I was no more, the Address which I then distributed might be found in many a poor man's dwelling, helping to strengthen himself, and to direct his children, in the way of righteousness. With the same end in view I lately composed, and intended to have printed and given away, an addition to my former Address, as a sort of antidote to certain books of infidelity which have of late years

years been industriously disseminated amongst the lower classes; but on reconsidering my design I abandoned it, being apprehensive that the subject was not suited to the age and capacity of young persons, who of all others ought not to be involved *in doubtful disputations.*

What effects may ultimately attend this diffusion of profane books it is difficult to foresee. My hope and expectation is, that God will turn to good what is intended for evil to his church; that a free discussion of every objection to the Christian religion will so establish it's truth, that the higher ranks will be induced to shew a more serious attention to the duties it prescribes than they have, in general, hitherto done. The influence of their example will have more weight, in removing from their inferiors the malady of infidelity, than any book which could be written for the use of the unlearned.

And if this be true of the example of those who, by birth or wealth, are elevated above the common people, it is peculiarly true

true of that of the clergy, who, by office and education, are distinguished from them. Your good example, like the penetrating light of heaven, will dispel the mists of doubt and disbelief from the eyes of all who observe your conduct. And who is there that does not observe the conduct of the clergy? It is watched (often with uncharitable attention) by sectarists of every denomination; it is noted by libertines of every description, as affording an apology for their depravity; all men, however blind to their own, are quick-sighted in observing the failings of their ministers. Take ye therefore especial care, that instead of being the salt of the earth to preserve the world from corruption, ye do not, by your example, accelerate its moral dissolution; that instead of being a light to guide men to heaven, ye do not become a stumbling-block in their way, and precipitate them into the horrid depths of disbelief of the Gospel and apostasy from God.

We all know that there is no sanctity in

in the colour of a man's clothes; yet there is a propriety and decency in dress; and he must have made little observation in the world who does not acknowledge, that the most important consequences are often derived from the most trifling causes. A peculiar sort of apparel distinguishes the clergy from the laity. It is not unusual to see young clergymen, who seem desirous of abolishing this peculiarity, as if they were ashamed of their Master; but it is very unusual indeed to see any one who is not despised by all serious men, and considered as a disgrace to his profession for attempting it. A clerical habit procures a degree of respect, which would not otherwise be paid him, to the poorest curate in the kingdom; unless when it is polluted by the drunkenness, sensuality, uncharitableness, by the vices or follies of its wearer; it then, in truth, sticks to him like the garment of *Hercules*, and poisons all his pleasures; it exposes him to the taunts of the profligate, to the derision of fools,

fools, to the contempt and aversion of all reputable men.

We are none of us so far advanced in sacred literature as to render a further progress in it unnecessary; we ought none of us to waste the precious hours of life, and especially we ought not to waste the precious hours of youth, in frivolous amusements. By a great eagerness in the pursuit of country diversions, you will probably disoblige your opulent neighbours, scandalize the poorer part of your parishioners, and forfeit the respect due to you from all. If you have any leisure you ought to dedicate it, principally, to the improvement of your understanding in scriptural learning. You may not perhaps have in your possession a great many books, nor the means of procuring them; but the understanding is more improved by reading a few books often over, and thereby digesting their contents, and making them, as it were, your own, than by running slightly over a great

great many. When I speak of good books, I would least of all be supposed to exclude the Bible from the number; you cannot make yourselves too well acquainted with that, the most excellent of all books. He who is thoroughly versed in the sacred text can scarcely fail of becoming a good Divine, according to the old saying, *Bonus textuarius, bonus theologus.* Not that I think the character of a good Divine consists solely, or chiefly, in being a good controversialist, for theological controversy is too frequently the sepulchre of Christian charity. But it becomes all professors of the Christian religion, and more especially does it become Christian Ministers, to be able by solid argument to convince the gainsayer; lest the enemies of our faith should triumph in our ignorance, and extend their conquests amongst those who, without our vigilance and assistance, are of themselves unable to repel the attack.

If schools are intrusted to the care of

any of you, think it not a mean office to be zealous in stamping upon the young mind the first impressions of piety, the first principles of religion. These early impressions may in a more advanced age chance to be obscured for a time by the filthiness of the flesh, or corroded by the sordidness of earthly cares, but they will never be wholly effaced: nor, if they should, will your labour fail of bringing to yourselves a great reward. A diligent, virtuous, and pious schoolmaster, appears to me to be one of the most important and praiseworthy characters in the community; And I am strengthened in this opinion by what *Erasmus* has said in his *Antibarbarorum—Tria sunt unde potissimum rerumpublicarum salus aut etiam pestis mihi pendere videtur; a principe recte aut secus instituto, a concionatoribus, et ludimagistris.* The minds of children are, in the hands of a schoolmaster, like clay in the hands of a potter; he may fashion them as he thinks fit: at home they may be marred by the viciousness, unskilfully formed through

through the ignorance, or wholly neglected through the carelessness of parents; but at school they ought to see nothing but the punishment of vice and the reward of virtue; ought to hear nothing but the commendation of good morals and good manners; ought to be instructed in nothing so sedulously as in piety towards God, in reverence for their parents, in self-government, in goodwill towards all.

I entreat you, Brethren, to take in good part this word of exhortation, and not to interpret it as a word of reproof, for it is not meant as such. The labours of the parochial clergy, in every part of the kingdom, are justly esteemed greatly instrumental in producing and preserving a sense of religious obligation in the minds of persons of all conditions. I have great confidence in believing, that the Clergy of the diocese of Landaff are not inferior to those of any other diocese, in their attention to the great duties of their station; but their care, how great soever,

ought not to preclude my solicitude for the everlasting happiness of that part of the flock of Christ which God hath intrusted to the superintendence of us both; the Scripture hath said to us both, *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the church of God.*

I conclude with congratulating you on the disappearance, and I trust the extinction, of that spirit of turbulence and discontent, which was by many thought portentous to the State, when I last addressed you from this place. I must own, that even at that moment of danger, when I thought it my duty to come forward by—an Address to the People of Great Britain—and by, a Charge to yourselves—(which your partiality made public,) I relied so much on the general good sense of the people, in making a proper estimate of the advantages they enjoyed as members of civil society, when compared with any other people under Heaven, that I did not then or at

any time feel that degree of alarm, respecting internal danger, which occupied the minds of many very wise and good men. Whether their apprehension or my confidence were best founded, is a matter now, thank God, not worth discussing, since dangers of every kind are, for the present at least, now happily at an end.

The Vessel of the State, after weathering a bitter storm, has at length (with her masts still sound, with her sails and her rigging still fit for service) been conducted into the port of Peace. There may the good Providence of God long permit her to remain in safety; and she will remain the longer there in safety, if she is careful never to exhibit to the enemy *nudum remigio latus*; if those on board are careful always to remain united in a determined purpose, as they were on a late occasion, to perish sooner than abandon her just defence.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

IN JUNE 1791.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

AFTER I had delivered the following Charge to the Clergy of my Diocese, I was requested by many of them, as well as by several of the Laity who heard it, to publish it. I had no reason for declining a Compliance with their request, except the opinion I entertained of there being nothing in the Charge meriting the public notice. I have lately heard that a written paper, purporting to contain the Substance of my Charge, has been circulated with, perhaps, unbecoming, if not uncharitable Industry. The Circulators of that Paper will now have an opportunity of knowing—what a little candour might have taught them to suspect—how defective Memory is in giving a just account of a discourse of some length. Few Men are less moved by unmerited Censure, or less solicitous in repelling groundless Calumny, than I am; but I conceive it to be a Christian Duty to suffer no man to continue in an Error, when it is in my power to remove it. Under the influence of that opinion I am obliged to trouble the World with this Publication.

R. L.

London, Jan. 2, 1792.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN JUNE 1791.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THIS is the third time in which the relation I bear to you, as your Diocesan, has obliged me to request your attention to a short address. I have, on the two former occasions, spoken to you with freedom and sincerity: I shall, on this, proceed in my accustomed manner; entreating such of you as shall not agree with me in sentiment on any subject I may have occasion to mention, to credit the Integrity of my Intention, and to excuse the Imbecility of my Argumentation.

A Revolution, as to the mode of it's Accomplishment, unparalleled in the Annals

Annals of the World, has taken place; or, to speak more properly, is now taking place in the Civil and Religious Constitution of one of the greatest Kingdoms in Europe. I deliver no opinion of censure or approbation on the supporters or opposers of this Revolution: it would be unseasonable to do it in this place, even if I was perfectly acquainted with all the causes and occasions which have produced it; and it would be improper for me to do it in any place; because, however well informed other men may think themselves to be on this subject, I profess that my knowledge of the Internal Government of France, of the State of Parties in it, of the Temper of the People, of the Finances of the Country, and of the other circumstances which have given rise to this political Phenomenon, is not such as to enable me to pass a decided Judgment on the utility or inexpediency of the measure. As a Friend to Civil Freedom, which consists not in democratic Licentiousness, but in Obedience to Laws enacted by the general

general suffrage of a free people, I cannot but rejoice in the Emancipation of the French Nation from the Tyranny of Regal Despotism: but, detesting the Despotism both of popular and aristocratic Demagogues, still more than that of Individual Monarchs, my rejoicing is held back, lest that Emancipation should be more apparent than real. I trust, however, it will in it's effects be real: for, whatever may be the final Issue of this wonderful Struggle, I am induced to think that the French will obtain three things—a Trial by Jury —an *Habeas Corpus* Act—and an incorrupt Administration of public Justice— —Blessings these of inestimable value! which were not till lately so much as heard of in France; which constitute the felicity of Great Britain; and in the Enjoyment of which it is our duty, as men, to wish all nations to participate. There may be some things in our Civil, and some in our Ecclesiastical Constitution, which call for a temperate Reform; but still we are a happy people, and do well to be jealous of

of any violent attempts to amend either*. --But omitting the consideration of the Civil State of France; I will advert to the change which has been effected in it's Ecclesiastical Constitution, and which was the only reason for my making any mention at all of a Revolution, which has so greatly excited the attention of Europe.

None

* Professions of Attachment to our Constitution in Church and State have been made by me on so many occasions, that I think it needless to repeat them on this. If any one, from the freedom with which I have been accustomed to speak of certain defects in both, should be disposed to question the sincerity of these Professions, nothing that I could say would remove his prejudice; I pray God to give him a more charitable mind. I leave it, however, to impartial men to decide, whose Attachment to the Constitution is the greatest—that of him who labours to remove such rotten parts of the glorious fabric of civil and religious freedom, as daily invite the attack of it's enemies—or that of him who, not unconscious of the danger, contents himself with thinking that it will not fall in his time. May the Wisdom of our Rulers, shewn as well by their Moderation in removing what is unsound, as by their Firmness in retaining what is whole, preserve this mighty Edifice, the Work of Ages, and the Envy of the World, from being levelled to the ground by the rude hand of Popular Discontent, of Fanatical Zeal, or Republican Violence!

None of you can have been so incurious as not to have remarked many alterations in the Gallican Church, which have been introduced into it by the Decrees of the National Assembly. I shall content myself with bringing to your recollection three of the chief.

The first respects the Diminution of the immense Revenues of some of the Ministers of the Church, and the Augmentation of the scanty ones of others. Considering the different talents, natural and acquired, of different Ministers; the different degrees of ministerial capacity requisite for the due discharge of the several offices existing in an established Church; and the utility of distinction and subordination in such Establishments; I cannot think that many reasonable men would be desirous of seeing all Church Preferments reduced to the same level: but it may be wished by all, that not only in France, but in England, and in every part of Christendom, such a well-apportioned provision might be made for the Clergy, that none of them might have

have so much, as to render them inattentive to the discharge of their respective functions; none of them so little, as to render an Accumulation of Benefices necessary for the support of any one. The time, I think, will come, though I may not live to see it, when a more equitable distribution of the Revenues of the Church of England will be settled in a quiet and legal way. At present, Pluralities and Non-residence are such a disgrace to our Establishment as all serious Men wish to see removed: they are, I am disposed to own, necessary Evils, springing from the great number of Appropriations and Impropriations which have taken place amongst us, by which some thousands of Livings are become of so little value, as to be utterly inadequate to the decent Maintenance of a Clergyman; and we all know how frequently the poverty of the Minister brings Religion itself into contempt, with the rude and undisciplined part of mankind. The Revenue of the Church of England has been magnified, I apprehend,

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by many writers much above the truth: I at least have no reason to think that it is more than sufficient for making a proper provision for all it's Ministers. But without wishing to see all Preferments of the same Value, I shall never cease to wish, that no Living in the Kingdom may be so small, as to render it necessary for any man to have two. The Church of France, notwithstanding what it has lost, is yet richer (if I am rightly informed) absolutely and relatively than the Church of England: it's absolute Revenue is said to be about six millions sterling; that of the Church of England falls much short of two. In France there are about twenty-four millions of Inhabitants to be instructed by their Clergy; in England about eight.

The Suppression of Monasteries in the Gallican Church is another Change meriting our Approbation. Many persons in the retirements of the Cloister had, unquestionably, their minds mortified to all worldly Concerns, and lifted up to Heaven with

with the pious fervour of true devotion; it would be want of charity to suppose otherwise; but it is no want of charity to suppose, that many persons of both sexes were in early youth, and before they could form a due judgment of what would be for their future happiness, immured in those living sepulchres, from sordid considerations of family expediency. Monastic institutions have never wanted their defenders; they are suited to the gloomy apprehensions of Enthusiasts, and to the base views of Hypocrites: they are not peculiar to Christianity; but wherever they exist, they have for their main support either the Credulity of the Vulgar, or the Superstition of the Opulent; and they will be abolished in all countries, sooner or later, in proportion to the increase of learning or the continuance of ignorance.

A third Change in the Ecclesiastical Constitution of France deserving our notice, is that complete Toleration which it holds out to all mankind in concerns of Religion. If any one should think this

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to be a Change in the Civil, rather than in the Ecclesiastical Constitution, I shall not dispute with him about words; but proceed to remark, that the *Alliance* (as it has been called) *between Church and State* is not in France supposed to be so intimate, that danger must be apprehended by the State, unless Churchmen alone are eligible to all civil offices. Men who neither celebrate the Mass, or pray to the Virgin Mary, or invocate Saints, or worship Images, or practise Auricular Confession, or believe in Transubstantiation, or fear the pains of Purgatory, or conform either in faith or worship to the doctrines and rites of the Established Church—these men are not in France excluded from the rights of Citizenship, on account of their religious opinions. When we take an enlarged view of the nature of man, and of the different situations in which not only different nations, but different individuals in the same nation, are placed with respect to religious attainments, we must feel the necessity of vindicating to every individual

of the human race the absolute right of worshipping God in his own way, without losing on that account the benefits accruing from a state of civil Society.—Thou art a Christian, and believest that Jesus Christ was sent from God, and that there is no other Name by which Men can be saved; —go and profess this thy belief at Pekin or Constantinople, and being there spurned with contempt, and excluded from all civil trust and authority for not admitting the divine missions of Confucius or Mahomet, think whether thou wilt not have reason to accuse the ruling powers, in those immense Empires, of Injustice. If God Almighty thinks fit to tolerate different religions in the world, suited, there is reason to believe, to the different intellectual and moral attainments of mankind, surely it becomes us to be kindly affectioned towards those who, agreeing with us in all the fundamental verities of the Christian Religion, differ from us only in matters of little importance.

You will readily perceive that I am

alluding to the Case of the Protestant Dissenters amongst ourselves. I think it to be in no degree the duty of a Bishop to attempt to influence the Judgment of his Clergy on political points; but I know it to be his duty to deliver his own Judgment, quietly and sincerely, on every point in which he believes the interest of the Church of Christ is concerned; and an attentive perusal of the History of the Church, from it's civil Establishment under Constantine to the present time, has compelled me to believe, that nothing has been of more disservice to Christianity than that religious Bigotry with which different Sects have, in all ages and countries, persecuted each other—*dum hic dicit Ego sum Athanasii, ille vero Ego sum Socini; dum hic dicit Ego sum Lutheri, ille vero Ego sum Calvini*; may it not be rightly said σαρκικοι εσε παντες—

The time would fail me if I endeavoured to enumerate the multiplicity of Sects which have in different ages subsisted, and which still subsist in the Christian Church; they amount to hundreds. This

diversity of opinion cannot be avoided, unless all men had the same humility not to be wise above what is written; the same ability to investigate the truth of what has been written; and the same honesty to profess it: but contumelious language, bitterness of spirit, and uncharitable censuring might be avoided, and ought to be avoided by us all. Christ is our common Master; to him we are accountable for the use of the reasoning talent which God hath committed to our care; and it is clear, from every page of the Gospel, that we shall not merit the favour of Christ by maltreating each other, under the pretence of serving him.

But it will be said, it is the duty of the civil Magistrate to discourage all opinions in Religion which are opposite to the established ones, and to hinder any man from holding an office whose faith is not correspondent to the public faith, and that it is his duty to do this, because there is such an *Alliance between Church and*

and State as cannot be broken on either side without imminent danger to both.—I mean not to treat this mode of reasoning with disrespect; it has had and it has Advocates of deserved literary reputation: but I must say that it never convinced me. I know it is the duty of the civil Magistrate, not only to punish crimes, but to prevent the commission of them; and as the belief of the existence of a God governing the affairs of this present World, and ordaining a future State of rewards and punishments, is amongst the most powerful means of such prevention; it seems to be his duty to provide, at the public expense, public Teachers of some Religion; and, in fact, every nation in the world has made such a provision. A question, however, here arises—Whether it be the duty of the Magistrate to provide at the public expense Teachers of one Sect of Christians (for I speak not now of Pagan or Mahometan Magistrates, but confine my consideration to a Christian Magistrate),

or Teachers of every Sect into which his Society may happen to be divided. This is a question which cannot perhaps be easily decided by those who seriously consider it: I must not, on this occasion, undertake to discuss it; I will rather assume as a principle to be admitted, that the morals of the Community will be better secured by an exclusive establishment at the public expense of the Teachers of one Sect, than by a co-establishment of the Teachers of different Sects of Christians. Yet I can never admit that it is agreeable either to the principle on which civil society is formed, or useful to the attainment of the ends men have in view in forming such society, that those who differ from the Religion of the Magistrate should, on account of that difference alone, be subject to persecution; and an exclusion from civil offices is persecution; it is not, indeed, the persecution of the Inquisition or of Smithfield; it differs from them in degree, but it resembles them in kind. I have argued

argued myself into this opinion in the following manner:—Punishment for religious opinions is Persecution, and Evil of any kind, inflicted by the authority of the civil Magistrate, is Punishment. This Evil may respect a Man's Person, or Liberty, or Property, or Character. Civil incapacity brought upon men by Law, is an Evil affecting their Property and their Character; their Character, as it exposes them to the imputation of being bad citizens; their Property, as it takes from them the possibility of acquiring advantages attendant on certain civil offices. These advantages, whether they consist of wealth, power, influence, or honour, are worth something; their value may be variously appreciated; yet being worth something, the possibility of acquiring them is worth something, and the taking away from any man that possibility on account of his Religion, is Persecution *. The Law, indeed, does not

* An objection to this manner of arguing has occurred to me, and I have no inclination to conceal it.

not permit every man to be a Clergyman, a Lawyer, or a Physician; but the ground of this prohibition is quite different from that

The supreme Magistrate in every civil community has a right to take from the Individuals composing that community, any portion of their *actual* property which he may judge requisite for promoting the public Good, for securing the public Safety. This principle, I believe, is not universally admitted; it appears, however, to me to be just; and this principle being admitted, does it not follow that the Magistrate has at least an equal right to use, for the same ends, the *contingent* property of Individuals, attendant on their Eligibility to certain offices? May he not justly say to such Individuals,—The Majority of the persons constituting the civil society of which you are members, is of opinion, that the public safety will be better secured by your being deprived of the property appertaining to certain offices, than by your being possessed of it. You, the Minority, are of a different opinion; and there is no common Judge to determine which is in the right. You are at liberty to form another civil Society; but whilst you continue Members of this, you ought to acquiesce in the Judgment of the Majority.—This objection is not so strong as that nothing can he said to invalidate it; nor is it so weak as that nothing can be urged in it's support; I am satisfied with having impartially stated it.

The day, I think, is not far distant, when that which the House of Commons hath refused to acknowledge to be a debt of Justice due to the Dissenters, will be conceded

that by which men of integrity and ability, and every way qualified for the discharge of their duties, are hindered from executing civil offices on account of their religious opinions.

Nor is the Policy of excluding them from civil offices on account of their religious opinions, less questionable than the Justice of the measure. The Dissenters are a numerous body in England; but they are divided into different sects, and have as much objection to each other as any of them have to the Church. If you wish to keep the various denominations of Dissenters disjoined, you should remove from them every cause of combining their strength; if you wish to mix them with the mass of Citizens, you should remove from them every ground of distinction.

conceded to them as a Boon from the State, as a pledge of brotherly Love from the liberality of the Church. Moderate Men in the interim (whether Churchmen or Dissenters) will, it is hoped, exert their influence in abating the violence, in removing the bitterness, in calming the irritation, which have unhappily been excited in the minds of many Individuals of both sides.

tinction. Were I a Dissenter of the most rigid kind, did I think that every thing ought to be risked for maintaining the cause of non-conformity, I should deprecate, as the greatest mischief which could happen, the liberality of a British Legislature in restoring Dissenters of every denomination to the rights of Citizens.

It is often, and I hope justly, said, that Churchmen (though there are some exceptions) are become more liberal than they used to be towards the Dissenters: the observation, I believe, is as true, that the Dissenters are become more liberal than they used to be towards Churchmen. But whatever doubts may be entertained concerning the disposition of Individuals either amongst Churchmen or Dissenters, there is a fact, the mention of which ought not to be omitted—the Church of England hath been prayed for by name in the general Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland. What can be more likely to establish and extend this harmony, than to abolish all civil occasions of division?

It

It is not the quantity of oppression which affects minds of sensibility, so much as the circumstance of being oppressed at all. The Dissenters feeling in themselves a consciousness of being as much attached to the civil Constitution of the Country, and of having done as much for it's preservation, not only in bringing back Charles the Second, but in bringing in King William, and in seating the House of Hanover on the Throne, and in resisting the Rebellions of fifteen and forty-five, as any other body of Citizens hath done, they think themselves hardly dealt with in being denied the rights which others enjoy, because some men are subject to groundless apprehensions, or occupied by inveterate prejudices.

It is a common Error in politics to continue laws and usages when the occasions of introducing them have ceased. The wisdom of the Legislature has been aware of this Error in some Instances, and has taken occasion to rectify it. The Roman Catholics have, on a former occasion,

occasion, and lately also, properly experienced this wisdom. The Dissenters too, have not only been relieved from the penalties of certain Statutes, passed against them in the reigns of Elizabeth and of James the First, by the Toleration Act, but their Ministers and Schoolmasters have been exempted from the penalties of several Statutes of Charles the Second, by an Act passed in the Reign of his present Majesty. It is worthy of remark, that every indulgence which has been shewn them by the Church, or by the State, has softened their dislike towards either of them: they have become better Citizens, as they have experienced more confidence from the State; they have become less of Dissenters from the Church, as they have had less fears of Ecclesiastical Persecution.

In what I have said on this occasion, I am not moved by any private regard for the Dissenters; I have a personal acquaintance with few of them, an intimacy

intimacy with none. Nor am I moved by any secret liking of the Ecclesiastical principles of the Dissenters; for I prefer on serious, I hope, and well considered grounds—Prelacy to Presbytery—the use of a Liturgy to extemporaneous prayer—a legal payment to a gratuitous support of the Clergy:—but I am moved thereto by an impartial regard to Justice, and by an utter abhorrence of Bigotry and religious Intolerance of every kind. King Charles, in his Declaration, spoke of some grave and learned Presbyterian Ministers who had waited upon him in Holland, and whom he says he found to be "Persons full of Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State; and neither Enemies (as they had been given out to be) of Episcopacy or Liturgy." I am in my conscience convinced, that many dissenting Ministers are as much misrepresented to the Governors of the State now, as their predecessors had been to King Charles then. Some of them may dislike all Church Establishments,

blishments, and may in their political Sentiments have a greater tendency to Republicanism than to a mixed Monarchy: but I think men of these principles are not many in number amongst them; and it would be an hasty conclusion to say, that even these men would be zealous in reducing their speculations to practice, that they would risk the personal security which they now enjoy, the property of which they are now possessed, in attempting, by acts of violence, to introduce a change into the Constitution of either the Church or State.

In having thus freely expressed my Sentiments on what appears to me the Injustice and Impolicy of excluding men from civil offices on account of their religious persuasions, I am far from insinuating any approbation whatever of the violent manner in which either the discipline or the doctrine of our Established Church has been attacked: all violence, either of attack or defence, in such matters, savours of Intolerance.

When

When Unitarians and Trinitarians, when Churchmen and Dissenters speak ill, and think worse of each other, for their several differences of opinion, they seem to me to overlook the main points in which they all agree, and to forget that they all are Christians, that they have all one hope of their calling—an expectation of eternal Life, as the Gift of God, through Jesus Christ.

It must be admitted as a fundamental truth, derived from the equality in which we all stand to Christ our common Master, that no Society of Christians whatever, or however distinguished by rank, power, wealth, numbers, learning, can have the least claim to any just authority of compelling others by threats, or calumnies, or penalties of any kind, to a fellowship of worship. You, they ought to say to all who dissent from them, are as free as we are; we affect no dominion over your faith, we are not the lords of God's Heritage: go and worship the Creator and the Conservator of the Universe in your own

own way; use no ring in Marriage, no Surplice in public Worship, no particular posture in receiving the Sacrament, no Sponsors when your Children are baptized, no Confirmation when they are grown up —but suffer us also to worship God in our way; let neither of us find fault with the other, but preserving good-will, practising courtesy, interchanging good offices, let us all be persuaded that at the last day our different services will be accepted by Him, whom God hath appointed Judge of all, with equal regard to the rectitude of our several intentions, and to the means we have used in acquiring information concerning the Truth. One of the best means we can use for the attainment of this end, is to keep our minds unprejudiced, open to Argument, and free from every degree of acrimony of sentiment or expression, against those who differ from us on any point either of doctrine or discipline. If I know myself, I have a mind neither hostile to the established doctrines of the Church of England, nor attached to them with

with such a blind and implicit reverence as to reprobate every discussion of them. I have ever practised in my own studies, and I would encourage in yours, a free Spirit of Inquiry into the meaning of the Scriptures. This Spirit ought not, on the one hand, to degenerate into a petulant affectation of Singularity, as if nothing was right which was established; nor ought it, on the other, to be so shackled in it's operation, as to be afraid of questioning the truth of what may have been sanctioned by public Authority. There was a time when our Ancestors were Pagans; there was another period during which they were Papists; and if the doctrine of some men—that no change ought ever to be admitted in the tenets of a Church established by Law—had been adhered to by them, we their Posterity might at this day have been occupied with the Druids in cutting Misletoe, or with the Catholics in transubstantiating flour and water into the Substance of God.

The Gospel of Christ has been polluted by the Craft of Men; it has suffered this

pollution from the earliest Ages of the Church to the present times; and nothing, under God's Providence, seems more fitted to restore it to it's original purity than the sober Zeal of learned and unprejudiced Inquirers after truth. Statesmen in general, and, I am sorry to add, too many Churchmen, are enemies to free Inquiry*. It is a maxim with many of both denominations, that the Religion which is established in a country must be maintained; and they are disposed to calumniate and to punish those who would call in question any of it's doctrines. This principle originates, probably, in the Churchman, from an apprehension of the Mischief which may attend Innovation; and it originates, probably, in the Statesman, either from a confined knowledge of the Christian System, or from a belief that one Mode of Religion may answer the purpose of Government as well as another, and that all Religions

* In making this observation I have no view to Individuals; and I believe it to be as little applicable to the Statesmen and Churchmen of this Country as of any other. But the History of every Country in every Age evinces it's truth.

Religions are but State contrivances, to assist the Impotency, and to enlarge the Extent of human Laws. Whilst this principle remains in the heart of any man, free Inquiry in religious concerns will, as far as his influence reaches, be checked; and if the temper of the times does not controul the temper of the man, pains and penalties will be inflicted on all those, who, in conscience, differ from the doctrines of the State.

The divine doctrines of our holy Religion want not the aid of human Laws for their Support. When Christian Magistrates assume to themselves the right of interpreting doubtful passages of Scripture in a definite Sense, they pollute the Altar of the Lord, though with a view, perhaps, of adorning and defending it, and often sanctify Error by the Authority of civil Laws. The History of the Church, from the time of it's civil Establishment, affords a thousand proofs of the truth of this remark. Examine the Acts of the Councils, convened by Imperial or Royal Authority in different parts of the Christian

World, from the Council of Nice to the Council of Trent, and you will find, that in many of them such doctrines were established as we Protestants believe to be absolute Errors. Examine the Confessions of Faith of the different Protestant Churches now subsisting in Europe, and you will observe in many of them such a diversity of doctrine as will make you wish that none of them had assumed any portion of that Infallibility which they properly denied to the Church of Rome.

In fine, my Brethren, you, perhaps, will think it to be your duty, and I am convinced that it is mine, to endeavour to secure the protection of God in another World, by propagating the pure Gospel of his Son in this; and the purity of that Gospel can by no mean be so well ascertained as by a modest and sincere Inquiry into what has been written by the Evangelists and Apostles, rather than into what has been delivered by Calvin or Arminius, by Sabellius or Socinus.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LANDAFF,

AT THE PRIMARY VISITATION

IN JUNE 1784.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED IN JUNE

1784.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I HAVE in my circular letter expressed to you the uneasiness which I feel in not being able to reside amongst you, and I repeat it on this occasion. To wean Mankind from the allurements of Sin, and to generate in their hearts an operative principle of religion, is a work of great difficulty, requiring the zealous and united efforts of us all. It is your business more especially, to whom the cure of Souls is immediately committed, to watch over them with a Godly Sincerity; but it is mine also not merely to superintend your labours, but to

co-operate with you in every matter tending to the Edification of the flock of Christ: I wish not to exercise dominion over your faith or practice, but to be your friend and fellow-labourer in the Lord's vineyard.

A Meeting such as this, though sanctioned by general use in all Dioceses, and rendered venerable by the antiquity of the custom, is still very inadequate to the great purposes which a Bishop ought always to have in view; it will neither bring him so acquainted with the Manners of his Clergy, as to enable him to reclaim the reprobate, if unhappily there should be any such, nor to encourage the deserving amongst them; nor will it allow him to exhort them all to diligence in their duty, to piety and regularity of conduct, by the most persuasive of all arguments, the uprightness of his own Example. But I forbear enlarging on an evil which it is not in my power to remedy.

The provision made for the Beneficed Clergy

Clergy in this Diocese is so very small, that the situation of the unbeneficed ones must, in many instances, be peculiarly distressing. I would entreat however those who are in the lowest circumstances not to despond; they are the Servants of a Master who can and will reward them for their patient continuance in well-doing; and their good conduct may raise them up friends in the world, where they had no expectation of finding any. But if they give way to Idleness and Vice, if they endeavour to become insensible of their situation by intemperance, I know not how they can hope to be noticed with respect by good and considerate men in this world, or what just confidence they can entertain of being rewarded in another. One thing I most earnestly recommend to their superiors in the Church—to treat them with kindness and affability. It is very barbarous by pride and insolence to tread down those, who are already humbled beneath our feet by the misfortune of their situation: the

the lower a man's circumstances are, the more susceptible is he of neglect, and that should be a reason with every humane man, to be particularly cautious in his conduct towards those who possess less of the goods of fortune than he does. We all know that great preferment in the Church is no sure test of worth of Character; and we are equally sensible, that it is of worth of Character alone that a man ought to value himself upon; but he who has more wisdom than other men, will ordinarily have more humility also and condescension; he will not think himself intitled to treat with contempt and disrespect the very meanest of his Brethren.

It is not however for their sakes only, though that would be a sufficient motive, that I wish to see the inferior Clergy treated with respect by their superiors; it is for the credit of the Order itself, and for the general good. I am little disposed to claim for the highest ranks of the Priesthood, any degree of honour or reverence

reverence from the Laity, beyond what the prudence of their conduct and the integrity of their manners shall give them a just Title to; nothing can be more unreasonable in any of us, than to expect to derive honour to ourselves from the Order we are of, when our lives are a reproach to our Profession; but still it is of great use to the community, that the Ministers of the Gospel should be well esteemed by the Laity in general: and when the lowest of the Clergy receive a courteous and liberal treatment from their more elevated Brethren, they will probably receive it from every one else.

But it is not a difference of Preferment alone that tends to introduce a distinction amongst the Clergy, they are distinguished also by their Educations. A superiority in learning and talents is certainly a better foundation for pride (though there can be no good one) than a superiority in fortunes; but learning and talents do not belong to all those who have been educated at the Universities,

nor

nor exclusively of all others to any of them. The Universities do indeed afford noble opportunities for intellectual improvement; but I have lived too long in one of them not to know, that many young men are very negligent in embracing the opportunities of improvement which are there afforded them. Let no one therefore, merely because he can style himself a Bachelor or a Master of Arts, presume to despise him who is honoured by no degree: if he have really availed himself of the great advantages which the Universities hold out to all their Students, if he be really distinguished by his great literary attainments, he will feel a pleasure in assisting those whose Educations have not been so favourably conducted, and will be one of the last to contemn them or to think highly of himself, for the more he knows, the more conscious will he be of his inability to know much: wherever we meet with great self-sufficiency of opinion, there I think we may be certain of meeting,

meeting, either with much ignorance, or with such a rudeness of disposition, as is utterly unbecoming the complacency of a Christian.

Being in a great measure a stranger to my Diocese, it is very possible that these Observations, relative to the treatment which the inferior Clergy ought to receive from their superiors in talents or fortunes, may be unnecessary; I hope indeed they are not wanted, and I am certain that I have not an Eye to any one Individual in making them.

There is another matter in which it will become us all (for I include myself in the advice which I give to you) to be very circumspect; I mean the manner in which we should conduct ourselves towards those, whether they be of our own Order or of the Laity, who differ from us in opinion respecting points of Theology. Want of moderation towards those who differ from us in religious opinions, seems to be the most unaccountable thing in the world. Every man who

who has any religion at all, feels within himself a stronger motive to judge right than you can possibly suggest to him; and if he judges wrong, what is that to you? To his own master he standeth or falleth; his wrong judgment may affect his own salvation, it cannot affect yours, for, in the words of Tertullian, *nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio.* This you must admit, unless you think it your duty to instruct him; but instruction may be given with moderation, and, considering that the Bible is as open to him as it is to you, you ought not to be over-certain that it is your duty to instruct him, for what is your Instruction but an attempt to bring him over to your Opinion? This principle should be received with great caution, or it may do much mischief, for it is on this principle that the Roman Catholics light up the fires of the Inquisition, and compass sea and land to make a proselyte—a proselyte! to what we Protestants believe to be the delusion of Satan, the very canker of Christianity, the

the grand apostasy foretold by St. Paul. There are many questions in Divinity, in the investigating of which the mind fluctuates with an irksome uncertainty, unable to perceive such a preponderance of argument as will warrant it in embracing as true, either the one side or the other. This hesitation arises in many cases from our not understanding the full meaning of the language, be it common, prophetic, or figurative, in which a doctrine is revealed; in some it proceeds from our attempting to apprehend definitely what is expressed indeterminately, or clearly what God hath not thought proper clearly to reveal; in others it is to be attributed to an indecision of temper, to which some men are peculiarly subject: but let it originate from what cause it may, it is far more tolerable than an arrogant temerity of Judgment. A suspicion of fallibility would have been an useful principle to the Professors of Christianity in every age, it would have choked the Spirit of Persecution in it's birth,

birth, and have rendered not only the Church of Rome, but every Established Church in Christendom, more shy of assuming to itself the proud Title of Orthodox, and of branding every other with the opprobrious one of Heterodox, than any of them have hitherto been. There are, it may be said, doubtless, some fundamental Doctrines in Christianity, concerning which no one ought to hesitate, inasmuch as without a belief in them he cannot be reputed a Christian. Reputed! by whom? by Christ or by you? do you undertake to measure the extent of any man's understanding except your own, to estimate the strength and origin of his habits of thinking, to appreciate his merit or demerit in the use of the Talent which God has given him, so as unerringly to pronounce that the belief of this or that doctrine is necessary to his salvation. It is undoubtedly necessary to yours, if you are persuaded that it comes from God; but you take too much upon you when you erect yourself into an

an infallible Judge of truth and falsehood. We as Christians are under no uncertainty as to the Being of a God, as to his moral Government of the world, as to the terms on which Sinners may be reconciled to him, as to a future state of retribution, nor with respect to other important questions, concerning which the wisest of the Heathen Philosophers had no settled notions. But there are other subjects on which the *Academicorum* εποχη may be admitted, I apprehend, without injuring the foundations of our religion. Such are the questions which respect the Person of Christ; for I can never bring myself to deny the name of Christians to all those who on the one hand cannot agree with Athanasius, or on the other with Arius, or with Socinus, on that point; those which relate to the Operation of the Holy Spirit; the power of Evil Spirits to suspend the laws of Nature, or to actuate the minds of Men; the effect of Adam's transgression on the moral faculties of his descendants; the

materiality or immateriality of the human Soul; the state of the dead before the general resurrection; the resurrection of the same body; the duration of future punishments; and many others of the same kind. Some one will think that I here speak too freely, and accuse me, probably, as an encourager of sceptical and latitudinarian principles—What, shall the Church of Christ never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of Bigots, from the insults of men who know not what Spirit they are of, when they would stint the Omnipotent in the exercise of his Mercy, and bar the doors of Heaven against every sect but their own? Shall we never learn to think more humbly of ourselves and less despicably of others? to believe that the Father of the Universe accommodates not his judgments to the wranglings of Pedantic Theologues; but that every one, who with an honest intention and to the best of his abilities seeketh the truth, whether he findeth it or not, and worketh

righteousness, will be accepted of him: I have no regard for latitudinarian principles, nor for any principles but the principles of truth, and truth every man must endeavour to investigate for himself; and, ordinarily speaking, he will be most successful in his endeavours, who examines with candour and care what can be urged on each side of a greatly controverted question. This sort of examination may in some instances produce a doubt, an hesitation, a diffident suspension of Judgment; but it will at the same time produce mutual forbearance and good temper towards those who differ from us; our Charity will be enlarged as our Understanding is improved. Partial Examination is the Parent of Pertinacity of Opinion; and a froward propensity to be angry with those who question the validity of our principles, or deny the justness of our conclusions in any matter respecting philosophy, policy, or religion, is an infallible mark of prejudice, of our having grounded our Opinions on fashion,

fancy, interest, or the unexamined tenets of our family, sect or party, on any thing rather than on the solid foundation of cool and dispassionate reasoning—*Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra.* Churchmen as well as Dissenters, and Dissenters as well as Churchmen, Protestants as well as Catholics, and Catholics as well as Protestants, are apt to give a degree of Assent to Opinions beyond what they can give a reason for; this is the very essence of Prejudice: it may be difficult for any man entirely to divest himself of all prejudice; but he may surely take care that it be not accompanied with an uncharitable propensity to stigmatize with reproachful appellations, those who cannot measure the rectitude of the divine dispensations by his rule, nor seek their way to heaven by insisting on the path which he, in his over-weening wisdom, has prescribed as the only one which can lead men thither.

This intolerant Spirit has abated much of it's violence in the course of this century

amongst

amongst ourselves; we pray to God that it may be utterly extinguished in every part of Christendom, and that the true Spirit of Christianity, which is the Spirit of meekness, peace and love, may be introduced in it's stead. What need is there that we should calumniate and detest one another, because we cannot agree in our notions concerning the Person of Christ? He is the *seed of the woman*, whose office it was to bruise the Serpent's head; the *seed of Abraham*, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; *the last Adam*, in whom all were to be made alive; *the Son, whom the Father sent to be the Saviour of the world*; *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*; the Advocate, who now liveth to make intercession for us; the Judge, who will at the last day reward every man according to his works: these and many other truths may be predicated concerning Jesus Christ, both by those who admit and by those who deny his pre-existence. His Authority as a Teacher is the same, whether you suppose

him to have been the eternal God, or a Being inferior to him, but commissioned by him: for the Gospel of Christ, whatever you may determine concerning the Person of Christ, is certainly sealed with the finger of God. We are under the same obligation to obey the precepts of the Gospel, are incited to obedience by the same hopes, deterred from disobedience by the same fears, whether we believe Jesus of Nazareth to have been co-eternal with the first Source of all Being, or to have been a Man miraculously conceived, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. There is one practical difference indeed, attending our different conclusions concerning the Person of Christ—this respects the worship of Christ—is he or is he not an adequate object of religious worship? If he be co-eternal and co-equal to the Father, then is he *necessarily* entitled by the excellence of his nature, to the same kind and degree of worship which we owe to the Father: but if he be a Being created in time, human, angelic,

or super-angelic, then is he *essentially* distinct from the Father, and inferior to him, inasmuch as the thing formed is inferior to him that formed it; he cannot, from any excellence of nature, be necessarily entitled to that kind or degree of worship which is due from every created Being to the one uncaused Cause of all Being. But this mode of reasoning, on which side soever you suppose the truth to be, does not seem to me to settle the point in question, inasmuch as Jesus Christ may by the appointment of God be constituted an adequate object of our Religious Worship, though he should not necessarily be so by the excellence of his nature. God may have communicated to him such a perfect ability to hear all our petitions, and such a perfect power to grant those which to his wisdom and goodness shall seem fit to be granted, as did not appertain to him from any excellence of nature; and he may have appointed all men to honour the Son, with the same kind and degree of worship with which they honour himself; and whe-

ther he has done this or not, can be known only by examining the Scriptures. But if different men, in carefully and conscientiously examining the Scriptures, should arrive at different conclusions, we trust that God, who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in Error. We trust that he will pardon the Unitarian if he be in an error, because he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an Idolater, of giving that glory to another, which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worshipper of Jesus Christ be in an error, we trust that God will pardon his mistake, because he has fallen into it from the dread of disobeying what he conceives to be revealed concerning the nature of the Son, or commanded concerning the honour to be given him. Both are actuated by the same principle, the fear of God; and though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope, and our belief, that if they add to their faith Charity, they will meet in Heaven.

Too

Too much pains cannot be taken by the Clergy, in examining the external and internal evidences of the truth of the Gospel, in order that they may generate in their own minds a full conviction of the unspeakable importance of the work in which they are engaged; but that conviction being once produced, their time will be far more usefully employed in discharging their pastoral office with fidelity, than in weighing the importance of all the discordant systems of faith, which have in different ages and countries not merely occupied the attention of Schoolmen and Monks, but unsheathed the swords of Princes, and polluted the temple of Christ with more blood than was ever shed on the altars of Moloch. Happily for our age this Spirit of persecution is well nigh extinguished; for, notwithstanding the sad fate of the Calas Family in France, notwithstanding the Demon of Fanaticism which spread it's delusion over London and Edinburgh on the relaxation of the laws against Popery, notwithstanding the burning

burning zeal of a few narrow-minded Bigots amongst ourselves, still we may foretel, from observing the signs of the times, that the æra is approaching very fast, when Theological Acrimony shall be swallowed up in Evangelical Charity, and a liberal toleration become the distinguishing feature of every Church in Christendom. The ruling powers in Protestant and Catholic States begin every where to perceive, that an Uniformity of Sentiment in matters of Religion is a circumstance impossible to be obtained, that it has never yet existed in the Church of Christ, from the Apostolic Age to our own; and they begin to be ashamed of the fines, confiscations, imprisonments, tortures, of all the unjust and sanguinary efforts which they have severally made use of to procure it. They perceive, too, that a diversity in religious opinions may subsist among the subjects of the same State, without endangering the common weal; and they begin to think it reasonable, that no man should be abridged in the exercise of natural rights,

rights, or excluded the participation of civil privileges, merely on the score of Religion. These enlarged sentiments proceed not, I would willingly hope, from what the Germans have called Indifferentism in Religion, but partly from a perfect knowledge of it's true end, which is Charity; and partly from that consciousness of intellectual weakness which is ever most conspicuous in minds the most enlightened, and which, wherever it subsists, puts a stop to Dogmatism and Intolerance of every kind.

Kindness and condescension towards each other, and moderation towards dissentients from your particular mode of faith and worship, should be accompanied with an active Zeal towards those over whom you are appointed Watchmen and Stewards. If any thing can revive a sense of Religion in the higher classes of life, preserve what remains of it amongst men of middling fortunes, and bring back to decency of manners and the fear of God the lowest of the people, it must be the

zeal

zeal of the Clergy. But that Zeal, in order to produce it's proper effect, must be founded in knowledge: it will otherwise, where from some peculiar temperament of body or mind it happens to exist at all, be unsteady in it's operation; it will be counteracted by the prejudices of the world, the suggestions of self-interest, the importunities of indolent habits; or it will be tainted by fanaticism, and, instead of producing in every individual sober thoughts of his Christian duty, it will hurry into dangerous errors the ignorant and unthinking, and excite the derision or abhorrence of men of sense. That Clergyman who is a Christian, not because he happens to have been born in a Christian Country, but from rational conviction, will never think himself at liberty to make light of his calling, to suit his instructions to the vicious propensities of his audience, to scandalize his profession by a conformity with the ungodly fashions of the world, to be ashamed of the Cross of Christ, though he should see it attacked by

by the subtlety of Sophists, or ridiculed by the wanton audacity of profane men. A deficiency of Zeal indeed, in religious concerns, does not always proceed, either in the Clergy or Laity, from a want of knowledge: sensual appetites, ungoverned passions, worldly customs, all conspire in making most men languid in the performance of even clear and acknowledged duties; yet it must be confessed, that a firm belief in the truth of Christianity, resulting from a comprehensive view of the proofs by which it is established, is the most probable mean of producing in all men integrity of life, and of animating, especially, the Ministers of the Gospel to a zealous and discreet discharge of their pastoral functions.

There is one subject more, on which I wish to say a few words; it is the practice of giving bonds of Resignation, which I have been informed, whether truly or not I do not pretend to say, is very general in this Diocese. Of these bonds there are two

two sorts; one is a general bond, by which the Clerk binds himself to resign his benefice whenever the Patron shall call upon him so to do; the other is called a Special bond, by which he binds himself to resign after a certain period of time shall have elapsed, or after a certain event specified in the bond shall have taken place. You have heard of the decision which took place in the House of Lords, last year: that decision was made on a case in which the bond was general; but the principle on which the decision was made, extends to special as well as to general bonds; so that all bonds of resignation, I apprehend, are for the future to be held illegal. Whether any attempt will ever be made to introduce a Law rendering special bonds legal, is very uncertain; it is probable that some such attempt will be made, and many good and reasonable men are of opinion that it ought to be made. That even special bonds of resignation should be admitted, is opposite to the spirit of our Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution. The law has appropriated a cer-

a certain part of the landed property of the Kingdom to the maintenance of the Clergy, and it puts every individual Clergyman into the possession of his respective portion so freely and fully, that he can support himself in possession of it, if he thinks fit, during life; the law says to him, This is your exclusive property so long as you perform the services for which it was given you, nay it is so strictly yours, that it is a very questionable point whether you can at your own pleasure divest yourself of it. The Patron has no property in the Church of which he is patron, except a spiritual property; the Law indeed has by some means allowed him to take a sum of money for his future right of presentation, and has thereby derived to him a sort of property in the Church's Patrimony; but, notwithstanding this strange permission, his property in it is very different from his property in other lands; he cannot occupy it himself, he cannot let it to a tenant, he cannot give it absolutely to any person he pleases, he cannot give

it to a proper person for any time he pleases; nor does his right of giving it at all last long, it expires in six months from the death of the former possessor. But this property which is annexed to the Church is unquestionably subject to the regulation of Law; I, at least, am not one of those who think that it belongs to the Church by any other Title than the Title which it derives from the Common and Statute Law; so that the simple question, whenever it is brought forward, will be, Whether a change in the tenure by which a Clergyman holds his property, be or be not for the good of the State? I hope never to be guided by such a sanctimonious reverence for any ancient constitution, either in Church or State, as to spurn at every change, merely because it is a change; but yet changes should not be admitted unless the advantages attending them be obvious and certain, and I profess that I do not see any public advantage which would attend the legality of special bonds of resignation. A Clergyman who has given a special

a special bond of resignation, and who knows from thence that he is to possess his living only for a few years, will not perform his duty so well as if he knew that he was to possess it for life. The ordinary services of the Church may be as punctually performed by him in one case as in the other, but there are many other parts of the pastoral Office which will not be performed so well. A long acquaintance is a species of friendship; but this friendship will never grow up between a Shepherd and his flock, when his time of guarding them is known to be short. When the relation is to subsist for life between a Parson and his Parishioners, both sides will feel a disposition to overlook, and will find it their interest to overlook, each other's infirmities; they will cultivate each other's good-will, and practise towards each other a great many Christian virtues, which neither side would think of if they expected that the relation would soon be broken. But whatever regulations may in future take place

on this subject, I thought it my duty to advertise you of the present illegality of all bonds of resignation.—And now, Brethren, commending you and your Labours to the favour of Almighty God, I conclude, as I begun, with beseeching every one of you to consider your Diocesan, though absent in person, as present in affection with you; as willing and desirous to become your servant for the sake of Jesus Christ.

I think it necessary to address one word to the Laity who are present, and I wish them to inform all who are absent of what I say. Since I came into this country, and indeed before I came into it, I have received several anonymous letters respecting some of the Clergy; accusing one Man of lewdness and incontinency, another of drunkenness, a third of neglect of duty, a fourth of other crimes. Now though I from my heart regret that any occasion is given for such Accusations, yet as some of them may proceed from

Malice and Ill-will, and as none of them are presented to me in such a Judicial manner as to enable me to take proper notice of any, I have to entreat all those of the Laity, who have the good of Religion and Virtue at heart, to step forth in the name of God, and to prove in the face of the world the crimes which they object to their pastors. They may rely upon my solemn promise, not to endeavour to screen any of my Clergy from such punishment and correction as the Law has committed to me; I will be ready by the Officers in my Court, to receive any well-grounded complaint, and to prosecute the accused party to his conviction, or acquittal; but I cannot suffer my reprehension to fall on any one, from an anonymous accusation, this would be Tyranny, and not Justice, in your Bishop.

SERMONS.

Sermon

I. (Heb. iii. 12.)—Preached before The King, at the Chapel Royal, 6th April 1783; and at Landaff, 28th June 1807:—with an APPENDIX, on the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

II. (John iii. 16.)—Preached before The King, at the Chapel Royal, 11th April 1802.

III. (1 Cor. xv. 22.)—Preached before The King, at the Chapel Royal, in 1791.

IV. (1 Cor. v. 7.)—Preached before The King, at the Chapel Royal, 15th February 1807.

V. (Prov. xxii. 2.)—Preached before the Stewards of the Westminster Dispensary, at their Anniversary Meeting, in Charlotte-street Chapel, April 1785.—With an APPENDIX, 1793.

VI. (2 Tim. i. 10.)—Preached before The Bible Society, at St. Bride's, 9th February 1800.

VII. (Gal. vi. 9.)—Preached before the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

VIII. (Gal. i. 7.)—Preached in the Chapel of the London Hospital, 8th April 1802.

SERMON I.

Preached before The KING, at the Chapel Royal, 6 April 1783; and at Landaff, 28 June 1807.

HEB. iii. 12.

TAKE HEED, BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF.

IT is not an easy matter to institute such a comparison between the manners of past and present times, as may enable us to draw a just conclusion concerning their relative excellence or depravity. The moral character of a Nation is an intricate thing, not to be unfolded with certainty by those who have taken most pains in it's investigation; hence there is great reason to suspect

the accuracy of all general observations tending to shew that we are either better or worse than our Ancestors were. They had their vices and virtues, their temptations to sin, and their opportunities of moral improvement, and we have ours; but God alone can tell whether, all circumstances considered, their demerit was greater or less than our own.

But though it be next to an impossibility to make such a just estimate of the whole of their character, or indeed of our own, as to authorize us in giving a decided general preference to either them or ourselves, yet in some particular things we may distinguish a diversity as to the degree of excellence; and if we should say that our Forefathers held the Christian Religion in an higher degree of estimation than we do, I think we should say no more than the truth; they did not, perhaps, understand it better, but they generally received it with a sincerer stedfastness of belief. Infidelity is with us a rank weed; it's root is principally fixed

fixed amongst the great and opulent, but the baleful influence of it's branches is extended over all the classes of the community. Many causes have contributed to this increase of Infidelity, but I shall at this time wish to direct your attention only to two, which mutually beget and support each other—The bad education of Youth, and the bad lives of grown-up Men.

Parents are usually more anxious to make their sons accomplished Gentlemen and good Scholars, than honest Men and good Christians. They take great care to provide for them the first masters to polish and form, after the most approved models, their exterior demeanour; whilst the quality of the mind is neglected, or, if attended to, is formed on a wrong principle. The young man is instructed to set a great value on many things which morally speaking are of no worth, and lightly to regard others which are of the greatest weight; to admire certain virtues and to reprobate certain vices, not because they are commanded or forbidden

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by the Christian Religion, but because the fashion of the world has stamped upon them it's seal of approbation or discredit.

Our Schools and Universities, we trust, are not negligent in teaching their Youth the principles of Christianity; but their endeavours in that way, if they were much greater than they are, or than can reasonably be expected from them, can never answer the end proposed, because they are liable to be thwarted, and in fact frequently are thwarted, and rendered nugatory and unfruitful by the inattention and bad example of Parents at home. In vain will it be expected that a young person should reverence a religion which is taught him by men whom he considers in the unfavourable light of being paid for their labour and uninterested in his welfare, whilst his Father either never speaks to him on the subject, or what is still worse, leaves him to collect from his own evident neglect of religious duties, from the unguarded levity or the incidental

dental profaneness of his discourse, the degree and quality of the faith which he professes.

The young Man may have been accustomed within the walls of his College daily to acknowledge his dependence on Almighty God, and to offer up his petitions and thanksgivings to him; but not observing, either in his father's family, or in the family of any of his father's friends, so much as a single instance of this duty, what can he conclude, but that it is a duty originating in the contracted manners of Monastic Life, a mere matter of discipline, adapted, like other trifling forms, to a state of puerile instruction, but to be left off for ever when that ceases.

The young Man may have been taught by his instructors to consider the dedication of one day in seven to the worship of God and the religious improvement of his own mind, as one of the most reasonable services in which a Being who has any hopes or fears of futurity can possibly be engaged; at Home, especially

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if his home happens to be situate in the Metropolis or in any great Town, he will see this day pass undistinguished from other days, except by the superior listlessness, fretfulness and disquietude, which a temporary cessation from frivolous amusements occasions in vacant minds. Instead of accompanying his parents to some place of public worship, and having his heart warmed by the observance of their fervent piety, and a reverential awe of his great Creator thereby impressed on his mind, he will see them busied in forming some wretched party of pleasure, in setting out on some unnecessary journey, in contriving some extraordinary means to relieve themselves from the irksomeness of remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

The Obligation of abstaining from all illicit commerce with the Sex, may have been inculcated by his Masters and Tutors, not only as a matter of prudence respecting his health, fortune, and reputation, but as an indispensable Christian

duty—

duty—in his Father's house he will hear fornication and adultery, under some less disgustful appellations purposely contrived to conceal their deformity, talked of without the least mark of disapprobation; the loose manners and shameless connexions of fashionable Prostitutes made subjects of conversation before modest women; and the violation of the Marriage Bed itself esteemed, on the Adulterer's part at least, as a piece of pardonable gallantry, concerning which even virtuous women blush not to converse with wondrous information and sad indelicacy.

What can be expected from this domestic irreligion, this parental neglect of guarding the minds of their Children from every contaminating example, of instilling into them a respect for Christianity as a rule of conduct? What, but infidelity in the extreme, and a consequent dissoluteness in private and profligacy in public life?

These are the natural, and in general they

they are the certain, consequences of the unchristian Education of Youth. Particular causes may produce particular exceptions. Thus a man may be just, from a principle of honour; temperate, from the apprehension of disease; chaste, from constitution; humane, from sympathetic affections; and disposed to perform many christian duties, without believing Christianity—this may be admitted. But what will become of him, who, feeling no restraints from the injunctions of Religion, is impelled by a principle of Interest to abandon his principle of Honour? What of him, whose bodily temperament enables him to indulge his appetites and pamper his sensuality without any apprehension of subsequent disease? What of him, whose continency is solicited by opportunity, and assailed by the pruriency of domineering lust? What of him, whose malignant and unfeeling temper prompts him to deeds of unkindness and inhumanity? A young Man who is pushed into the world without

without having his mind seasoned by a sense of Religion, is like a vessel on the surface of the ocean without a rudder; he is liable to be driven on rocks and quicksands by every storm of every passion. His danger becomes more imminent, and his state more deplorable, if, as is usual, his education be finished by foreign travel. In foreign Catholic countries he sees Religion tricked out in the idolatrous garb of Paganism, supported by lying wonders, rendered so abominably deformed by superstitious observances, that he hesitates not in pronouncing it to be a dispensation unworthy of God. He makes a right conclusion, but his error consists in not distinguishing Christianity from it's corruptions; he mistakes the Catholic for the Christian Religion, and not taking any pains to discriminate them, the Infidelity which a neglected education had planted is cherished and established, and rendered inveterate by Popish imposture.

Nor is the evil less with respect to the ordinary

ordinary Education of Women. They indeed seem to stand more in need than the other Sex, of having their virtue strengthened by the precepts of Religion; not from any fancied inferiority of their talents to distinguish between right and wrong, or any superior propensity of their natures to vice, but from their being exposed to greater temptations; for, besides the strength of their own passions, they have the wicked arts of seduction to withstand. The passions of Women were as strong, and the arts of seduction were probably as great, in former periods of our history; but our Statute Books were in no period so shamefully stained with the abandoned deeds of adulterous women of all ranks, as they have been within the last forty years. This is an increasing evil, and requires the interposition of the Legislature to put a stop to it. Adultery was punished with death in some of the best constituted States of Antiquity; but if this punishment should be thought too severe for

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our relaxed morality, imprisonment for a certain number of years might answer the end of bringing both the guilty parties to repentance, and of deterring others from following their example, and the Public it is apprehended would sustain no damage by the temporary seclusion of such corrupted members from society.

Whole years are consumed in teaching young persons languages which they will never be under any necessity of speaking, music which they will never have any delight in practising, and other modish accomplishments tending to fill their minds with levity and boldness: But as to Christianity, though it's principles are to be learned as well as the principles of any other Science, they are left to pick up their knowledge of it from the tales of their nursery, and when that is quitted, the licentious manners of the world soon teach them to consider want of fidelity to the Marriage bed, not as a Sin specially prohibited by Almighty God—Thou shalt not commit Adultery—but as an action, the

main turpitude of which consists in it's being known.

This defect of parental Institution in the Principles of Religion, is seldom supplied by our own attention to the subject at a more advanced age. Our time and inclination are too much occupied in the pursuit of the profits, the pleasures, or the honours of life, to leave us leisure for making the proper inquiries; and if we had leisure we should want a disposition to make them, lest the result should be repugnant to our wishes, lest it should render us uneasy in the practice of Sins which from long habit we cannot think of parting with. Thus Infidelity arising from a bad Education, first emboldeneth the stripling to practise immorality, and immoral practices hinder the grown-up man from making an effort to get rid of his infidelity.

How can he, who, in climbing the ladder of Ambition, tramples at every step on sincerity and truth, who scruples not to circumvent a friend, to flatter a fool, to hold

hold commerce with a knave, to descend to every mean compliance with the vices of the Great and the follies of the Vulgar; how can such an one think with patience of examining into the truth of a Religion, which sets no value on the pomp and glory of the world, esteeming not him who is adorned by the highest honours, but him who is distinguished by the brighest virtues, as more excellent than his neighbour?

How can he bring himself to look into the proofs of Christianity, whose sordid mind is chained to the earth by the love of Money? who compasses sea and land, divests himself of every principle of humanity, makes shipwreck of conscience and a good name, in order to acquire a fortune? Instead of taking pains to believe, he must fear and detest a Religion which represents riches as snares of our virtue, as impediments in our road to heaven, as furnishing indeed, whilst we stay here, purple garments, fine linen, and sumptuous fare, but not as being able to procure for us in another world so much

as a drop of water to cool our tongues, and assuage the torment of everlasting burning.

Other Vices, such as drunkenness, whoredom, envy, slander, malice, revenge, to which men have long habituated themselves, become so many arguments with them against the belief of a Religion which condemns them all. If they do undertake to make any examination into it's truth, they do it reluctantly, carelessly, with corrupted judgments, and a secret propensity to reject it. Such men may be able with tranquillity and impartiality to investigate a hidden truth in the abstract Sciences, in Jurisprudence, in History, in Politics, because their happiness is no way affected by it's truth or falsehood, there is no right eye to be plucked out, no right hand to be cut off, no darling Sin to be forsaken; but the matter is quite different when the inquiry is concerning the truth or falsehood of Religion. For, if Christianity be true, they may be certain that their salvation, whilst they continue presumptuously to act against it's injunctions,

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is exceedingly dangerous; that they are standing on the very brink of a Grave which yawneth for them, and which, in shutting her mouth upon them, will consign them to a place of unutterable and everlasting woe; that consequently no time is to be lost, but that they must instantly set about abandoning their Sins and amending their lives; and this being so hard a task, it is not unnatural for them to be desirous of believing it to be an unnecessary one, and of course they become disposed to magnify every little difficulty attending the proof of the truth of Christianity, into an irrefragable argument of it's falsehood.

The infidelity of such men does not proceed from any superiority of understanding, any peculiar accuracy of inquiry, any vast subtlety of judgment, by which they excel others, but from the captivity they are under to their lusts. The world has inticed them by it's allurements, the flesh has subdued them by it's importunities, some favourite Sin has beset them

so long, that their reasoning faculties are inslaved, their affections depraved, their consciences rendered callous, and their wills perverse: in the words of the Apostle, they are "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

This may be thought a rough method of treating the Infidelity of the Age, and many an one who rejects Christianity, will conceive himself injured in having his immorality assigned as a cause of infidelity. It is not our duty in any place to render men easy under their Sins, by speaking smooth things, but from this place especially they must expect to hear the truth; and I fear it is a truth not to be questioned, that Unbelievers in general, I do not speak of every individual, but that Unbelievers in general reject the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, because the profligacy of their lives makes them afraid lest it should be true.

The little care which is taken in teaching young persons the principles of our holy Religion, and the dislike which grown-up persons

persons conceive against it, from it's condemning that way of life which they approve, those prejudices of the world to which they are conformed, are the two main sources of Infidelity. The removal of the first would greatly deaden the activity of the second; for if any amendment of the world is ever to be made, it must be made by amending the Education of Youth.

Surely it behoves Parents, of every degree, to weigh this matter with great seriousness; their neglect in this point may not only introduce much sin and misery into the world at large, but it may render that posterity, for whose short-lived temporal advantage they often venture to incur the risk of their own damnation, unprotected of God in this world, and objects of his indignation in another. It behoves them to consider that they, under God, have been the cause of giving existence to an innocent and helpless Being, by their instrumentality it has had a beginning of existence, but it is not in their

power to say when it will have an end of it; it will have no end of existence, it will live for ever and ever. But though the duration of the existence which they have given to the child of their love, does in no wise depend upon them, the quality of it does. Though they will not be able some millions of years hence to blot this poor Being out of existence, if it should then chance to move their compassion by it's misery, yet they may even now guard it against being in misery in that or in any more distant period: they may even now build up the clay which is put into their hands, into a vessel which God's mercy may see fit to preserve in everlasting honour. Let them then not neglect this blessed opportunity, let them fashion it with care; if not for the love they bear it, let them do it for the love they bear themselves, for their own personal interest, for their everlasting happiness or misery is closely connected with their diligence or with their neglect in forming the religious character of their Offspring.

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As to those who are arrived at a state of manhood or old age, without having ever seriously considered the purposes for which they were born, the natural relation in which they stand to the God who made them, the providential dispensation of religion under which they live, the trial which they are to undergo, and the unalterable condition consequent thereon; surely it behoves them to be negligent no longer in a matter of such unspeakable importance, but resolutely and speedily to withdraw themselves from the din and tumult of the world, from the business and the pleasure of this short dream of existence, and to meditate again and again on things respecting their everlasting peace.

It is a shame for Men who are born in a Christian country to continue Pagans; to have no clearer conceptions of the Deity, no sublimer Piety, no warmer philanthropy, no purer morality, no better hopes of futurity, than if they had never heard of the name of Christ: Wo unto them! it will be more tolerable for the

the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them.

God forbid that in the excess of our zeal we should presume to circumscribe the extent of the divine mercy; we sincerely pray that it may embrace every human Being; but as faithful Stewards of God's word, it is our duty to preach the Gospel with sincerity, without studying to render it suitable to men's finite faculties, or palatable to their wayward humours, by concealing any part of it's doctrines; and what the doctrine of the Gospel is with respect to those who reject Christianity when offered to their consideration, you will judge from the words of Christ himself—Go, said he to his disciples after his resurrection, *Go ye into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* And in another place it is said, "He that be-
"lieveth on the Son hath everlasting life:
"but he that believeth not the Son shall
"not see life; but the wrath of God abideth
"on

"on him." If then the attainment of eternal life, and the avoidance of God's wrath, be matters of consequence, the receiving or the rejecting of the Christian Religion cannot be, what some unhappily think them to be, matter of Indifference.

May God grant that the number of those amongst us, who negligently and fastidiously, and triumphantly as it were, though to their ruin, reject the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be diminished every day! and for this end may all serious and well-disposed persons, of every rank and denomination, exert their best endeavours; and especially may the Ministers of that Gospel double their diligence, in cautioning the inconsiderate, in repressing the forward, in silencing the disputer, in abashing the scorner, in reclaiming the reprobate, in confirming the wavering, in winning men over to Christ, not only by the purity of their doctrines, but by the unshaken probity and true Christian simplicity of their lives.

APPENDIX.

THE observation which was made in the beginning of this discourse—that our Forefathers held the Christian Religion in an higher degree of estimation than we do—is true, we fear, with respect to the great mass of the people; but we hope and think that it is not true with respect to the most enlightened part of it, the Legislature of the Country: our Ancestors, if they had not the guilt of introducing, certainly had the demerit of encouraging, and by Law establishing, a very nefarious and unchristian traffick, which, a year ago, the Legislature reprobated and put an end to. You perceive that I allude to the Abolition of the Slave Trade. I delivered my sentiments on this great subject, in my place in Parliament; but I cannot think it out of season to touch upon it here. The principles of Christianity are never out of season; the oftener they are repeated,

repeated, the better will they be remembered, and the better they are remembered, the more will they be practised; and on the practice of them depends, not that which Men so eagerly aspire after, an increase of wealth or honour, but an increase of peace of mind, and of hope in God.

Men of mercy and humanity! bear with me, I beseech you, for a moment, whilst I congratulate this Audience on an Event more deserving your applause than the most splendid Victory in the most just and necessary War. It is in fact a noble victory over the worst Enemies of human kind, over the Passions which afflict and degrade our Species, over mercantile cupidity and individual inhumanity.

Believers in the providence of God! "who hath made of one blood all nations," bear with me, if I cannot descend from this holy place without humbly offering up praises and thanksgivings to the Almighty, for having by his Holy Spirit influenced the King, and the great Council of the Nation, to finish that mighty work of Christian

Christian Love, which hath been for so many years in agitation.

Thanks be to God! that the Legislature of this Empire hath at length emulated the humanity of the Emperor Alexander Severus, when he inscribed on his palaces and public edifices at Rome, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This summary of what the Law hath commanded and the Prophets have taught, we have written with a pen plucked from the wing of the Cherubims shadowing the mercy-seat of God. This writing will be read with tears of gratitude and joy throughout the Continent of Africa; it will be read with a pious purpose of, sooner or later, following our example, by all the Nations in Christendom; and whenever it is read with attention, it will soften the obduracy of our nature into kindness and compassion, it will contribute to humanize the most savage, to spiritualize the most selfish, and ultimately to christianize the whole Earth.

We are confessedly the most enlightened

Nation on the surface of the Globe, eminent above all others in abstract science, and in all the industrious and peaceful arts of life; and by this disinterested exertion of Christian principle in abandoning a lucrative but inhuman Trade, we testify to Pagans, to Mahometans, to Jews, and to Christians, that we are also the most religious and humane. We prove to all who will observe our conduct, that our Religion consists not in wrangling about doubtful articles of faith or indifferent ceremonies, that it wastes not itself in words, but shews itself in deeds; that our humanity is not derived merely from sympathetic affections, that it is not founded in the terrors of superstition, that it springs not from the fanatical illusions of enthusiasm, but from a sober, intelligent, deliberate sense of religious duty. Duties, you well know, are distinguished by Moralists into duties of perfect and of imperfect obligation, but Christianity scarcely allows the distinction; and even heathen moralists did not approve it, when they tell us, that to be innocent according

according to law, was but a narrow principle of virtue, that piety and humanity require from us many things which the public Law does not require.

The constable cannot seize a man, the magistrate cannot commit him, the judge will not try him at the bar, for the neglect of actions, which at another bar the most merciful of all Judges will condemn him for not having performed, when he shall say to those on his left hand—"Inasmuch "as ye have not done it to one of the least "of these my brethren"—an oppressed, distressed, friendless, hopeless Negro will not be excluded from this brotherhood—"ye "have not done it unto me."

In an hour of warfare and danger we have greatly dared to perform a Christian duty; and if there is a God governing the nations upon earth, as doubtless there is, though we may not be able on every occasion certainly to say, this is his work—this humane Act of the British Legislature will never be blotted from the Registry of Heaven: We may perhaps experience great

great calamity, for what nation doth not deserve punishment! but we may entertain a just confidence, that in the day of our distress, God will call to remembrance this national act of Christian philanthropy, and that the remembrance of it will arrest in it's descent the rod of our chastisement, or mitigate the severity of it's infliction.

SERMON II.

Preached before The KING, at the Chapel Royal, 11th April 1802.

JOHN iii. 16.

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, TO THE END THAT ALL THAT BELIEVE IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

IT has been urged, both in ancient and modern times, as a serious objection to the truth of the Christian Religion, that on it's first promulgation it was embraced by none but obscure and illiterate persons. This objection, if it were admitted, is of no weight; for, whether a blind man was restored to sight, a dumb man to speech, a dead man to life, in general, whether works surpassing human art and strength

strength were publicly performed; of these things, as simple matters of fact, the meanest and most ignorant persons are as competent judges as their superiors in station and knowledge. The objection, however, need not be admitted, since it is not founded in truth. Several persons of great consequence became early disciples of Jesus; "among the chief Rulers," says St. John, "many believed on him;" and in the number of these one is mentioned by name—Nicodemus—a Pharisee and a Ruler of the Jews, one, probably, of the seventy chief men who composed the highest Tribunal of the Jewish Government. This Man became a believer in the divine Mission of Jesus, and continued such on precisely the same ground on which the multitude believed in it—"Rabbi," said he to our Saviour, "we know "that thou art a teacher come from God; "for no man can do these *Miracles* that "thou doest, except God be with him." Here, by the bye, it may be remarked, that a Ruler of the Jews, a Teacher in

Israel, a person who for rank, learning, influence in the Jewish State, might properly be compared with a Peer, Bishop, or Judge, in our own; this Man acknowledged, not only that Jesus wrought miracles, but that miracles were a proof of a divine Mission. Whence is it then that some amongst ourselves have contended that Jesus wrought no Miracles, and that if he had wrought them, they would not have been a proof that he was sent from God? In conversation with this learned Jew, who had come to Jesus by night (probably to inquire how he might partake of the kingdom of Heaven which was at hand) our Saviour made the declaration in the text, or, as the original might be better rendered—"God "hath so loved the world, that he hath "given his only-begotten Son, that every "one who believeth in him may not "perish, but have everlasting life."

"God hath so loved the world"—what world? What did Jesus, speaking to a Jew, mean by that expression? Not surely what

what Nicodemus probably believed him to mean—the Jewish nation, as distinguished from the people of the Gentiles—not, it is humbly apprehended, what, from the age of St. Austin to the present time, many have understood him to mean—the regenerated, the justified, the elected, the predestinated few, as distinguished from the reprobated many—No, the world which God hath so greatly loved as to send his Only-begotten for it's salvation, is the whole race of human kind propagated from Adam, and, in consequence of his Transgression, subjected to everlasting death.

That the salvation of the world, from the death brought on it by Adam (of whatever nature that death may be) proceeds entirely from the love of God as it's primary cause, is a very important doctrine, and has not been so much attended to as it ought to have been by those who have considered the subject of Man's Redemption. It is a doctrine, moreover, as consolatory as it is important.

It does not permit us to look upon the Almighty Author of our Being as an implacable parent, an inexorable judge, a vindictive tyrant, dooming to eternal perdition the Creatures which he hath made. By the nature we derive from Adam, we are weak, imperfect, mortal Beings, liable to error, subject to temptation, prone to transgression; but we are not even in that state hated and abandoned of God, he still loves us, and hath out of his love for us contrived means for our restoration to immortal life.

This comfortable doctrine is not built merely on a single text, it runs through the whole of the New Testament. It is delivered by St. John, in his first general Epistle, in nearly the same words in which it stands in his Gospel, as the declaration of our Saviour to Nicodemus—" Herein " the love of God was manifested towards " us; that God sent his only-begotten " Son into the world, that we might live " through him. Herein is love, not " that we loved God, but that He loved

" us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation " for our sins." It is inculcated by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, " God com- " mended his love towards us, that while " we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"— and again, " He that spared not his own " Son, but delivered him up for us all." To these and other similar passages which might be produced, to shew that the love of God is the fundamental Cause of the salvation of the world, may be added those in which Jesus professeth himself to have been sent by the Father—" God " hath not sent his Son into the world " to condemn the world, but that the " world through him might be saved"— "And we have seen and we bear witness," says St. John, " that the Father sent the " Son to be the Saviour of the world." Nay, God is not only said in Scripture to have loved the world, and to have sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, but he is said also to have delivered him up to be slain by wicked hands—" Ye men of " Israel," said St. Peter to the Jews, " hear

" these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man
" whom God hath attested among you by
" mighty works, and wonders, and signs,
" which God did by him in the midst of
" you, as ye yourselves [also] know: him,
" being delivered up to you by the deter-
" minate counsel and foreknowledge of
" God, ye have taken, and by wicked
" hands have crucified and slain."—Allow me to digress for a moment, to observe that in this Speech, spoken on the fiftieth day from the resurrection of Christ, and when the transactions mentioned in it must have been fresh in the memory of his hearers, Peter—that Peter who had through fear denied his Master—now boldly tells many thousands of the Jews, that Jesus whom they had crucified had wrought miracles in the midst of them, and that they knew that he had wrought them. Is it possible to suppose that any man of a sober mind would have made this irritating appeal to his hearers, and those hearers his enemies, concerning a recent event, if that event had not been a notorious

a notorious matter of fact? But if it be a fact that Jesus wrought miracles in the midst of the Jewish Nation, Scepticism must abandon it's doubts, Infidelity can have no prop for it's support.—I return to my subject: Now if God be the great primary cause of the salvation of the world; if before it's foundation He willed the end, determined the means, and in due season accomplished the purpose of his love; how is it that we are taught by some to consider every individual of the human race as estranged from his love, so polluted, depraved, vitiated even before they were born, as to be fit objects of his abhorrence, so utterly lost and ruined as to be subjected to his positive curse, and doomed by his irrevocable decree to eternal misery? This doctrine seems to be a misrepresentation of what reason teaches concerning the benignity of the Divine nature, and to have been derived from a misinterpretation of Scripture. That informs us, almost in every page of the New Testament, that Men

even

even in a state of Gentilism, when they are represented as dead in trespasses and sins, as weak, ungodly, sinners, enemies to God, that even in that state he so loved them that he gave his only-begotten Son for their salvation; or, in the words of St. Paul to his Ephesian converts, "God is rich in mercy, for his great love "wherewith he loved us, when we were "dead in sin, hath quickened us, given "us life, together with Christ."

This gracious disposition of the Almighty towards Mankind, even before Christ had paid the price of their redemption, is so forcibly revealed in Scripture, that St. Austin himself is compelled, as it were, to acknowledge it, though he could not but be sensible that it was no small objection to his System. "Incompre-"hensible," says he, "and immutable is "the love of God; for he did not begin to "love us when we were reconciled to him "by the blood of his Son, but he loved "us before the foundation of the world, "that together with his only-begotten "Son

"Son we might be his before we were "any thing at all." Calvin expresses himself to the same purpose, when he says— "We are all of us guilty in the sight of "God, and born to damnation in Hell; "yet, because he would not lose in us "that which is his own, he hath found "out something which he may love in us; "*for how much soever we are sinners, yet* "*we remain his Creatures*, how much "soever we have brought death upon "ourselves, yet he had formed us for "life, so by his mere and *gratuitous* love "he is induced to receive us into favour."

But though God's love of Human kind, or, in the words of St. Paul to Titus, "the "kindness and philanthropy of God our "Saviour," be unquestionably the primary Cause of our salvation, yet is his only-begotten Son as unquestionably the secondary cause of it; and in the very place here referred to, where God is called "our Saviour," Jesus Christ is also called our Saviour—"through Jesus Christ our Saviour we become Heirs as to the hope of

of everlasting life." Nor is there any contradiction in this—God is the efficient, his only-begotten Son is the instrumental cause of the Salvation of Mankind. This instrumental Cause is not a blind but an intelligent, not a mechanical but a voluntary Cause—it is an only-begotten Son conspiring with the Father in design, concurring in will, co-operating in power.

The term "only-begotten," is applied to our Saviour five times by St. John, and not once by any other writer in the New Testament; by the others he is called—the Son—the beloved Son—the Son of his love—the image of the invisible God—the first-born of every creature—and, figuratively, the Lion of the tribe of Judah—the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. There are two reasons why the term "only-begotten" belongs exclusively to Christ, one is, the circumstance of his miraculous conception—"The power of the Highest "shall come upon thee," said the Angel to the Virgin Mary: "therefore that Holy "Child also which shall be born of thee, "shall

" shall be called the Son of God." And as no other child was ever thus begotten, Jesus is properly called the only-begotten Son of God. The other reason respects the pre-existence of Christ, for as he was in the beginning with God, and all other things were made by him, he may on that account also be properly called, the only-begotten Son of God.

Innumerable are the volumes which have been written on the Incarnation of Christ, and the mode of union between his divine and human nature. But I forbear entering upon so abstruse a subject, from a persuasion that it exceeds all human comprehension, from a conviction, at least, that it exceeds mine. I like not that species of speculative divinity, which does not move the heart to the amendment of life; it springs from the exercise of our faculties on subjects above their reach, it is nursed by confidence in our own and contempt of other men's opinions, and it's fruit is seldom any thing better than contention, bitterness and intolerance. We know

know very little of our own nature, we understand not how perception arises from the impulse of matter on the organs of sense; we cannot explain even the origin of a dream; nor can all the metaphysical acuteness of a Clarke, a Leibnitz, or an Hartley, shew how one thought ceases and another begins to exist in the human mind; what hope then can we entertain of understanding how the infinity of the Divine nature could enter into the womb of a virgin, and unite itself to the nature of Man? Nor is this sort of knowledge necessary for us. We may know the benefits we derive from Christ, the duties he has enjoined us, the relation in which we stand to him as our Lord and Saviour, as our present Advocate and future Judge, without knowing every thing concerning him which a vain curiosity, like Eve's desire to be made wise, may suggest as expedient to be known.

Leaving, then, such unprofitable researches, let us proceed to inquire into matters more interesting to us, and better suited

suited to our apprehension—What is the benefit which we derive from Christ as the instrument of God's love and mercy to mankind?—What is to be done on our part to render us fit for the reception of this benefit?

The first question may be easily answered—The benefit is, that we shall not *perish*, but have everlasting *life*. The nature of the happiness which will attend that everlasting life, can no more be conceived by us during our present life, than the visible beauties of the creation can be conceived by a man born blind, or the harmony of sounds by one that is deaf. Scripture tells us, that it will consist in a knowledge of God and of Christ: "This," says our Saviour, "is eternal life, that "they may know Thee, and Jesus Christ, "whom thou hast sent."

The second question is more difficult—We must believe in the only-begotten Son of God, before we can receive the benefit designed for us—"Every one that believeth "in the only-begotten Son of God, shall "not

" not perish, but have everlasting life." Now what, you may ask, is the import of the term " believeth?" There are two opinions on this point deserving notice, inasmuch as each of them has been maintained by men of talents, piety and integrity, who have appealed to Scripture in support of their respective systems.

It is then the opinion of many, that to believe in the Son of God, is to believe that Jesus Christ suffered in our stead the punishment due to our sins, that he offered himself a real vicarious sacrifice, or, as the doctrine is expressed in our Liturgy, that " he made by his one oblation of himself " once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient " sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for " the sins of the whole world." The texts of Scripture on which this opinion is principally founded are the following—" Christ " by his own blood having obtained for us " an everlasting Covenant." (Heb. ix. 12.)— " How much more shall the blood of Christ, " who, through the everlasting Spirit, " offered himself spotless to God, cleanse " your

"your conscience from dead works?" (ver. 14.)—"He hath been manifested "to put away sin by the sacrifice of him- "self." (ver. 26.)—"Christ also was "offered once to bear the sins of many." (ver. 28.)—"Christ hath once suffered for "sin, the just for the unjust." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) —"Walk in love, as Christ also loved us, "and gave himself up for us an offering "and sacrifice to God." (Eph. v. 2.)

The advocates for this opinion, not willing to rest their cause on these declarations of Scripture, have endeavoured to support it by reasoning: "God (say they) "is not only supremely merciful, but "supremely just; but his justice requires "that our sins, being committed against "his infinite Majesty, must be punished "not only with temporal but with eternal "pains both of body and mind, which "pains we cannot escape till the Justice "of God be satisfied: but when we could "not make satisfaction, God gave his only "begotten Son to satisfy for us." (Synod of Dort.) His infinite nature assumed our

nature, and by his dying in our stead, an infinite satisfaction was made. Thus, it has been said, the death of Christ was an equivalent, without which God could not, and with which he could not but pardon Sin. Nay, but O man, who art thou that presumest to say what God could or could not have done with the Creatures which he hath made: fitly may thy folly be rebuked in the words of Isaiah—"Hast "thou directed the spirit of Jehovah, "and as one of his Council hast informed "him? Hath he consulted thee that thou "should'st instruct him, and teach him in "the path of Judgment?" (Isai. xl. 13. Lowth's Trans.) Ill does it become such Beings as we are, to attempt to measure the mercy and justice of God, by referring them to the standard of human mercy and human justice. But even an human Government is not actuated in the exercise of it's Justice by a cruel and vindictive disposition. It inflicts punishment greater or less in proportion to the offence, but the principle of it's infliction is mercy—

Mercy

Mercy either to the offender that he may be amended by his suffering, or to others that they may be secured from his future aggression, and that all may be deterred, by observing his punishment, from following his example. And it certainly is a pleasing view of the divine nature, and conformable, it is apprehended, to the deduction of reason, and the representation of Scripture, to consider the Justice of God as originating from, and as regulated in it's application by, his Mercy.

The other opinion respecting the nature of that Belief in the only-begotten Son of God, by which we are put in a condition to obtain everlasting life, maintains, that Christ died in a certain sense for our benefit; but it rejects as irrational, unscriptural, impious, every notion of propitiating God to mankind by a vicarious sacrifice. The texts of Scripture by which the first opinion is supported, are interpreted by the defenders of the second, not in a literal but in a figurative sense. They contend that we may as reasonably

believe in Transubstantiation, from the literal sense of—This is my body—as in the proper sacrifice of Christ, from the literal sense of —Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.— This reasoning is not devoid of strength; yet it does not appear to me to be just, and for this reason—in the interpretation of Scripture language we ought not to have recourse to a figurative sense, unless the literal sense involves an absurdity. This rule of interpretation cannot, I think, be controverted. Let us apply it to the case in point. When a man says of a piece of bread, This is my body—and of a cup of wine, This is my blood—we see at once that a literal meaning cannot be admitted, and without hesitation we adopt a figurative interpretation. When Christ called his disciples sheep, himself the door of the sheep-fold, and said, "if any man "enter in by me, he shall go in and out, "and find pasture,"—no one thinks that Christ literally meant that he was a door, and his disciples sheep which should find a field to pasture in. But when it is said,

that Christ gave his life "for the life of the world" (John vi. 51.)—that "through the everlasting Spirit he offered himself spotless to God" (Heb. ix. 14.)—that "he loved us, and gave himself up an offering and sacrifice to God"—there is no absurdity, no ambiguity in the expressions, the sense in the literal acceptation of the words is obvious, and the voluntary (Matt. xxvi. 53. John xviii. 6. & x. 18.) death of Christ seems to establish the literal and to exclude all figurative interpretation.

One ground, indeed, for annexing a figurative meaning to all the Scriptural expressions concerning the vicarious Sacrifice of Christ may be supposed, and, if it could be shewn to have a real foundation, it would be a sufficient ground: If it could be shewn that the acceptance of such a voluntary sacrifice for such an end, was repugnant to any one of the natural or moral attributes of the Deity, then must we of necessity give up the literal and adopt some figurative sense of the texts which have been produced. This,

I think, has not yet been shewn; and till it is shewn, it is safer for such Beings as we are, who see but a little of God's government of moral Agents, and understand very imperfectly what we see very darkly, it is safer for us to rest our faith in the literal than in the figurative meaning.

There is yet a third sense of that Belief in Christ which will insure to us everlasting life. It is a sense far removed from speculative subtlety; it abounds in practical importance, it consists in Obedience to his Word; and this sense is intelligible to the meanest capacity. What Christ said to the believing Jews he says to the believing Gentiles also—"If ye continue in my "word, then are ye my disciples indeed," (John viii. 31.) It is by obeying the precepts of our Lord, that we shew our belief in him.

You feel, perhaps, in your most serious moments, an indecision of opinion respecting the person of Christ, whether He existed from Eternity, or was produced in Time; whether He had any existence before

before he was sent into the world to restore Mankind to that Immortality which had been lost in Adam; you cannot, it may be, positively determine whether the scriptural expressions of—Redemption through the blood of Christ—of his offering himself a Sacrifice for Sin—of his bearing our Iniquities—ought to be expounded literally or metaphorically: You tremble, with propriety, at the idea of offering prayer and adoration to any created Being—and you tremble, with no less propriety, at withholding from Christ that honour which is due to him, either *essentially* by virtue of his Nature, or *derivatively* in consequence of God's command. On these and other similar points you are sincerely anxious to believe what is true, but what the truth is you cannot from the best use of your faculties indubitably ascertain to your own satisfaction. Let not this humble hesitation of Judgment, this cautious suspension of Opinion, this reluctance to profess belief unaccompanied by conviction, this modest abhorrence of

dogmatical temerity, let not this temper of mind disturb the tranquillity of your conscience. God is not an Inquisitor entrapping you by captious questions, and fabricating, from your inability to answer them, snares for your condemnation. An arrogant and intolerant Man may say to you, Unless you believe as I believe, without doubt you shall perish everlastingly. But God is wiser than man, and, knowing the extent of our reasoning faculties, will make allowance for their unavoidable imperfection—God is more merciful than man, and, knowing the sincerity of our endeavours to attain truth, will pardon our involuntary error of Opinion. Consider the ineffable majesty of Almighty God! and attribute not to Him the petty passions of a Man. Your belief, your unbelief, your doubtfulness, concerning any point—cannot affect his happiness: Nor does it seem that these states of mind can otherwise affect ourselves, than as they affect our Piety, our Integrity, our Self-government—than as they influence in some way or other

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our moral attainments. Live as the Gospel bids you live, and do this from a steady principle of obedience to it's Author, and you need not, I trust, fear that this sort and degree of belief will be too scanty for your salvation.

But if your heart is gangrened by malignity, tormented by envy, inflated by pride, by the pride of blood, of talents or of wealth—if you are given to calumny, delighted with revenge, unrelenting in your resentments—if you are drowned in the beastly sinks of sensuality, chained to the earth by the sordidness of avarice—so wedded to the vices, so conformed to the follies, so overwhelmed by the business, so distracted by the cares, so occupied by the vanities of this world, as to make no efforts to obtain everlasting life in another—if such be the unhappy state of your mind, such the pitiable tenor of your conduct; though you should believe all the abstruse points in Divinity with as firm a persuasion as the most rigid System-maker ever required from his followers, yet will your belief

be

be of no avail; your knowledge of Christ being barren and unfruitful, He will never say unto you—*Ye are my disciples indeed.* Though I am far from thinking it to be a matter of indifference to what denomination of Christians a man belongs, yet the question (it is presumed) at the last day will not be—Are you of the Greek or Latin Church? of the Catholic or Protestant persuasion? a follower of Calvin or Arminius? but, whether you have fitted yourselves for the fruition of Heaven by Holiness of Life, whether you have put off the old man, and adorned your minds with Christian Virtues; without these, were the gates of Heaven thrown open to you, you could not enter into it; you would be afraid and ashamed to mingle in society with Angelic Natures, yourselves being strangers to angelic dispositions. The Gospel is our guide to Heaven; it teaches us how we must purify, as many contend, a *corrupted*—how we must exalt, as all experience, an *imperfect* Nature. The admonitions, exhortations, precepts, threatenings, promises

mises of the Gospel, have all one and the same tendency—they all instruct us to sublime our piety, to enlarge our philanthropy, to subdue our evil propensities, to spiritualize our carnal dispositions, that we may become meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. "Whether every man may by the use of his own reason and assiduous study of the revealed will of God, be enabled to correct what is amiss in his sentiments, affections, and actions, without any extraordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost," has been affirmed by some, and denied by others; but it is needless for us to discuss this question on this occasion, since, by whatever other means we may be assisted in our progress to Heaven, it is certain that without our own diligence in the practice of Christian Virtues, we shall never reach it. "If ye "know these things, happy are ye if ye "do them,"

SERMON III.

Preached before The KING, at the Chapel Royal, in 1791.

1 COR. XV. 22.

AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE.

I LOOK upon the Text which I have now read to you, to be one of the most important in the whole Bible; it speaks to us of life and of death; and these surely, to every human being, are subjects of unspeakable concernment: it explains to us the cause of our greatest anxiety, and the occasion of our greatest consolation; for what anxiety can be compared to that which arises from the daily expectation of death? and what consolation

consolation can be so powerful, as the assurance that we shall not die eternally, that death shall not always have dominion over us?

In treating of this subject, I will endeavour to prove to you two propositions; they are both of them highly worthy of your attention:

1. That the dispensation of Death which passed upon all men from Adam's transgression, is a dispensation in no wise inconsistent with divine Justice.

2. That the dispensation of Life which came upon all men from the obedience of Christ, is a signal, and on our part unmerited, instance of divine Mercy.—I proceed with the first.

We know little concerning Adam's situation in Paradise, except this, that had he continued innocent, he would not have been obnoxious either to pain or death. Some, indeed, have affirmed, that Adam was as naturally mortal as we are; and have suffered in this, as in many other matters, their ignorance of God's proceeding

proceeding to become to them a reason for misinterpreting his word. How the bodily frame of the first Man, if in every thing it resembled ours, could have been perpetually preserved from external injury and internal decay; how the Garden in which he was placed could have been large enough to hold his future progeny, if that progeny had been multiplied in the same proportion that ours is,—God knoweth—it surpasses our ability to determine the manner in which either matter could have been effected; but we are certain, notwithstanding, of this, that had he not transgressed he would not have died, at least he would not have died that death which is now come upon us all. He was told—"Of the tree of the "knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt "not eat of it: for in the day that thou "eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Hence we draw this undoubted inference, that if he had not eaten he would not have died—he did eat, "and so death passed "upon himself and upon all other men,

"even

"even upon them who had not sinned after "the similitude of his trangression."

The nature of this death has not always been understood by interpreters of Scripture in the same way, nor are they yet come to any unity of opinion on the subject. Many have thought, and there are some who think so still, that by the phrase—thou shalt surely die—is meant a spiritual death, a debasement of all the fine faculties of the Soul, with which God is supposed to have originally endowed it, a total corruption of every good principle, and an introduction of every vicious propensity: Others understand by it, a consignment of body and soul to everlasting torments: God himself, I think, explains it by an utter extinction of Being, a deprivation of the blessings of life, a returning to the insensibility of the ground from whence Man was taken; "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The expression itself—thou shalt surely or utterly die—occurs in many other places of the Old Testament. When

Abimelech

Abimelech forbad his people from having any unlawful commerce with the wife of Isaac, he ratified his command in the same words in which God prohibited Adam from the taste of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil—He that toucheth this man or his wife, shall surely die. When Saul wanted to slay David, he said to Jonathan—Send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. Now neither Abimelech or Saul had any other power than that of inflicting a temporal death, they could neither vitiate the moral nature, nor doom to everlasting torments the Souls of those who disobeyed their commands. The power of God over us is, we acknowledge it, unlimited; he may mar the work that he hath made, and destroy both body and soul in Hell; yet cannot we be certain that his threat to Adam imported any thing more than what is usually, I had well nigh said than what is always, meant by the same phrase in other parts of Scripture—a corporal death, a putting

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an end to this terrestrial existence. And this cannot be considered as a small punishment.

Death is the greatest Enemy of our nature; from the moment of our birth he incessantly watches for an opportunity to subdue us; and over much the largest portion of our kind he soon accomplishes his design, for he suffers not an half of those who are born into the world to arrive at the age of full maturity, but hurries them away, and hides them in the cold chambers of darkness, before they have had leisure to contemplate this wonderful System of things, ability to form a moral character, opportunity to taste the comforts of life, or apparently much cause to bless it's Author. Over us, whose fortune it has been to escape the violence of his first attacks, his Tyranny is not less obvious or less deplorable: he imbitters all our enjoyments by dreadful apprehensions of his approaches; do what we will, or go where we can, we are sure to be met at every

turn, and affrighted, by his hideous form; the feast is not free from his intrusion, the voice of melody cannot sooth him, beauty cannot soften him, he pays no reverence to rank, honours cannot charm him, nor riches bribe him, nor eloquence and learning dissuade him from his purpose; thousands of diseases are his ministers to afflict us, and all the beneficial elements of Nature occasionally become his instruments to destroy us.

Things were not always thus; for we are told that when the Heavens and the Earth were finished, and all the host of them, "God saw every thing that he had "made, and behold, it was very good." If there had then been either pain or sorrow, or disease or death, in the world, God would not have pronounced his work a good one, for these are doubtless sore evils; but they are not of God's making; God did not bring death into the world, by Man came death, "by one man sin "entered into the world, and death by sin; "and so death passed upon all men."

But it appears, probably, to you an unjust proceeding, that all Mankind should suffer for one Man's transgression, that you should die because Adam kept not his integrity, that the evil of his misconduct should extend itself to all his posterity. This is with many men a difficulty of such great weight, that it makes them stumble as it were at the very threshold of Religion; and they turn with scorn or abhorrence from a Revelation which commences with a principle subversive, as they contend, of our natural notions of the divine attributes. In order to remove this difficulty, I would observe, that we do not in similar instances make similar conclusions, nor affect to arraign in similar terms, either the dispensations of God, or the appointments of human jurisdiction.

It is the established order of Nature, that what is propagated, should resemble the stock from which it is produced, should partake of it's soundness or feel it's infirmity. This principle obtains in every thing that

hath life; it is as true of vegetables as of animals. The husbandman builds his expectation of a good crop on the soundness of his seed; bad seasons and untoward accidents may prevent the thriving of the best, but if the seed be originally sickly and vitiated, no future culture can remove the malady. We may lament the lot of an infant who is born of parents, whose constitutions have been ruined by excessive drinking, or any other kind of intemperance, or who are themselves afflicted with any hereditary disease; we may lament it's lot, I say, but we must not presume to accuse God of injustice, for suffering it to come into the world under such disadvantages; we must not expect that he will reverse the order of Nature for it's sake. To have lived free from pain and every natural evil, which we now experience, and to have been transplanted, without tasting of death, into some better country, would, it must be owned, have been a system of things much more desirable than the present; just as it is a more desirable

able circumstance to be born of healthy than of unhealthy parents. But what right have you to such a dispensation? shew us the ground of your claim, tell us how God becomes your debtor, before you accuse Him of injustice, in not having done every thing for you that you desire. When Adam transgressed, where were you? when he was punished, what had you that you could call yours? Do you look upon Paradise as your property, and that you were injured when it was taken from you? we ask you to produce your title to it: you could not at any time have purchased it, for you could never have had any thing but what God gave you, nor could God have then given it to you, for you then had no being; and if He had never suffered you to have one, but in cutting off Adam had put an end to Human kind, we should never have heard of these ill-grounded complaints. If you dislike your present situation in the Universe, and think that you are hardly dealt with in not being placed in a better, consider

whether the beast of the field may not with equal reason complain, that he hath not the advantages of a man; you had no more right to be created at all than he had, nor is it from any merit of yours that you are made his superior: Consider whether Beings superior as well as inferior to Man, will not have the same cause for complaint and discontent. Instead of having the whole creation rejoicing before God, and praising him for the ineffable blessing of percipient existence, we shall, on your principles, have Angels murmuring against Archangels, and the highest rank in Heaven impiously repining that they are not equal to their Maker. Nor does it make any difference in this consideration, whether you are detruded into this state of mortality in consequence of Adam's transgression, or whether you had been originally placed in it by the express appointment of your Creator. That you exist at all, is his gift; that you are not a stone, or a tree, or a worm, is by his ordering; have you not great reason then to be

be thankful for being placed so high in the scale of existence? There is no injustice in God's having made different orders of Beings, with various powers for the perception of various degrees of happiness; nor is there any in his withholding from the whole human race those advantages, which the first of that race forfeited by his disobedience.

Let us look at this matter in another light. Suppose that your Ancestors have for many generations been in possession of a great Estate, and distinguished by the highest honours of the Civil Community in which you happen to be born; suppose also, that your father wastes by gaming and riotous living this great family estate, and reduces himself and children to absolute beggary; nay, goes one step further, and by committing treason against the State, forfeits the high rank by which he and a long list of his progenitors had been elevated above the rest of his fellow-citizens: in consequence of your father's folly and treason, you his son become

destitute of support, are obliged to work for your livelihood, and to remain without distinction in that country where your forefathers had abounded in wealth and honour. On these suppositions, we may allow you to censure your father for want of prudence, but we cannot allow you to accuse the Civil Community of Injustice; you have lost nothing that strictly speaking was yours; the wealth which is wasted was not collected by your frugality, the rank which is forfeited was not acquired by your services: you are in no worse a condition than thousands of your neighbours; they were born in that poverty and obscurity to which you are reduced by your father's indiscretion, but as they never think of accusing the State of injustice, for suffering them to continue in such a low condition, so should not you think of making foolish complaints against it, for it's permitting you to remain in that to which you are reduced. This observation is easily applied to the case in point; We are children of an indiscreet parent;

Adam

Adam forfeited his rank, and we his progeny are reduced by his treason to a lower station than what he enjoyed. But in the infinity of the divine works there are millions of Beings who are in a worse situation than that to which we are reduced; and what right have we to be placed above them? there would have been no injustice in God's dealings with us, had we been reduced to a level with the lowest.—I have said as much on the first head as the time will allow me to say, especially as it will receive some further illustration from what remains to be said on the second—That the dispensation of Life which came upon all men from the obedience of Christ, is a signal, and on our part unmerited, instance of divine Mercy.

The dispensation of death, which is now done away, is a very dreadful thing, though we should be apprehensive of nothing after it. To be obliged to abandon all the wealth which we have raked together with so much care, the distinctions of life on which we set so high a value; to be thrust out

out of those habitations which we have built with so much pleasure, and so fondly called by our own names; to be compelled to exchange warm and splendid apartments, which we had so often filled with the wanton roar of merriment and laughter, for a silent and dismal abode, where the worm will be our only fellow, where the eye of our nearest friend dares not look in upon us to drop a tear upon our carcass, lest the ghastly sight should petrify him with horror, or the noisome smell should breed a pestilence in the world; and in that wretched habitation to have every part of this goodly tabernacle our body attacked and disfigured by the principle of corruption, and speedily reduced into a mass of earth not to be distinguished from the dust upon which we tread; and to be even now persuaded that we must remain in that senseless state for ever—is a thought full of terror and amazement; the mind of Man, civilized or savage, shrinks from the contemplation of it with horror and dismay.

dismay. How signal then is the mercy of our great Creator, in breaking for us the bonds of death, and restoring us to eternal life! Though worms destroy this body, yet shall we see God; though we die the death inflicted upon Adam, yet have we hope in our death; though we descend into the grave, abandoned by all the world, yet are we not even there forsaken of our friend, our father, and our God; through his almighty power He will cause us to come up out of our graves, the earth at his bidding will cast out her dead, this corruptible will put on incorruption, this mortality will be swallowed up of life. O glorious change! and to be devoutly aspired after by every thinking Man. Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory, and trodden under our feet the universal and unrelenting enemy of our kind. Yet not to any merit of ours is this victory over death to be ascribed; the mercy of God in this new dispensation is wholly on our part undeserved; eternal life is not a debt which

which is paid to us, it is a gift which is bestowed on us, "it is the gift of God "through Jesus Christ;" "not by any works "of righteousness which we have done, "but according to his mercy he saved us." "By the offence of Adam, judgment came "upon all men to condemnation;" and from that dreadful state of eternal death, to call it by no worse a name, we could never have redeemed ourselves; alas, our Actions rather tend to expose us to a sad reckoning beyond the Grave, than to free us from the condition into which Adam has brought us; we die it is true for his transgression, but we deserve death and future punishment too for our own. Christ would have done much for us, if he had only reversed the consequence of Adam's transgression, if he had only abolished death; but he hath done much more, his Grace hath abounded beyond the offence; he hath not only freed us from the bondage of death brought on us by Adam, but he hath afforded us the means of atonement for the

the sins committed by ourselves, and prepared for us in Heaven a degree of happiness far exceeding what we should have enjoyed in Paradise had our great Progenitor never sinned. The first-born of all creatures became a man, the Son left the bosom of his Father, was pleased to lead a miserable life upon earth, to be buffeted by Satan, evil-intreated by wicked men the ministers of Satan, to become obedient to death, that He might for our sakes, in the warm and emphatic language of Scripture, become the plague of death, and the destruction of the grave. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed; the Lamb that was slain hath redeemed us to God by his blood; "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, " to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, " and strength, and honour, and glory, and " blessing from every tongue."

But perhaps it may appear strange that this Lamb should be slain for you; and you may be disposed to reject the promise of eternal life, because you cannot com-

comprehend the reason which induced God to give it you through the hands of a Mediator, or because you may have some doubts concerning the nature and office of this Mediator. It is much to be lamented that on this, the most important of all subjects, we reason worse than on any other. Would any of us refuse accepting the Title Deeds of a great Estate, because we knew not all the motives which induced the Donor to send them to us by a particular Messenger, or because we did not fully understand every thing respecting the rank and quality of the Messenger? Eternal Life is this Estate, the Title Deeds of it are contained in the Gospel, God is the giver of it, and Jesus Christ is God's Messenger; let us receive the inestimable gift with thankfulness, and with a firm persuasion, that the difficulties which attend all our reasonings concerning the works of God displayed in the creation and redemption of the world, proceed wholly from our inability to comprehend them.

I have

I have but two reflections to make from what has been said; and they apply to all.

The punishment of Adam suggests to every one of his Posterity who will consider it, the unpardonable nature of Sin. The Creation, when God had finished it, was beautiful and good; the Earth poured forth it's abundance, without the labour of the Ox or the sweat of the Husbandman's brow, there was neither thorn nor thistle to be seen; Man, the noblest of God's terrestrial works, was not subject to sorrow or corruption—Behold, he sinned, and the whole face of Nature changed, the ground was cursed for his sake, he was made to eat of it with sorrow, death was inflicted upon himself, and it hath reigned over all his posterity, that they might have constant occasion to contemplate the sad effects of Sin. When you look upon the pallid corpse of your friend, your parent, or your child—before you withdraw your eye, big with sadness and sorrow, let this thought sink deep into your hearts—that you then behold, not the work

work of God, but the horrid work of Sin; not the ordinary course of Nature, but the ruin of human nature introduced by Sin. The transgression of Adam was but one, and it may appear to you a slight one; it was not in reality so, an act of presumptuous disobedience to the Will of God can never be a slight offence; you perhaps may be daily guilty of many, and of greater; be assured that the nature of Sin is not changed since the time of Adam, it's wages were then death, and you must not expect that it will now reward you with life. Nor is the nature of God changed; he was always merciful, and never willed the death of his creatures; he wanted not goodness to have pardoned the Sin of Adam, but consistently with his purpose of promoting Virtue and Holiness through the unbounded extent of his creation, we presume he could not have done it: Flatter not therefore yourselves, that if you continue in Sin, it will be possible for him to pardon you.

The last reflection which I would trouble you

you with at this time is a short one, but it is one of the greatest consequence; and I heartily wish that it may not be negligently received, or hastily forgotten, by you; It is this—Whether you desire it or not, you will all be made alive in Christ —as surely as we shall all die through the disobedience of Adam, so surely shall we all be raised from the dead through the obedience of Christ. Our pleasure has not been consulted in either dispensation, both are the work of God. If there is any one in this assembly (I pray to God that there may be no such person) but if unhappily there should be one, who would be willing to relinquish the life purchased for him by the blood of Christ, who would abandon all his bright prospects of futurity, and be contented to lie hid, and rot, in the gloominess of the grave for ever; by the Spirit of truth I tell such an one, that his wish will not be complied with; by the terror of the Lord I warn such an one, to amend his ways, and to think of that day when he will be raised to everlasting glory, or everlasting shame.

He who hath defrauded his neighbour, and he who hath polluted his neighbour's wife; he who hath oppressed the poor, and caused the orphan and the widow to mourn; he who hath blasphemed his God, and never thought of his Sabbaths; he who hath corrupted his ways and wallowed in the filth of the flesh—All, all shall be made alive in Christ; by his unspeakable love we are all freed from the first death, and it must be our own fault if we are subject to the second.—I conclude with a most solemn declaration, worthy of our highest regard; listen to it, I beseech you, and let it sink into your hearts! It is not a declaration of my making, it is a declaration of Him who loved us and laid down his life for us, even of Christ himself—"Marvel not (says he) at this: the time is "coming, in which all that are in their "graves shall come forth; they that have "done good, unto the resurrection of life; "and they that have done evil, unto the "resurrection of damnation."

SERMON IV.

Preached before The KING, at the Chapel Royal, 15th February 1807.

1 COR. v. 7.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US.

THE historical evidence for the truth of the Gospel is sufficiently convincing to those who have ability and inclination to examine it with an unprejudiced mind. The time and place in which Jesus Christ lived; the manner in which he spent the three or four last years of his life; the circumstances attending his death, resurrection, and ascension; are all detailed in books, of the genuineness and authenticity of which there are far stronger proofs,

internal and external, than there are of the genuineness and authenticity of many profane books, to which all men give undoubted credit. Whence then is it, that there are and ever have been men utterly indisposed to admit the truth of the Gospel? This indisposition principally proceeds from two sources:—first, that the Gospels, besides ordinary historical events, contain an account of miraculous events;—secondly, that they seem to state as doctrines proceeding from Almighty God, such as appear to be repugnant to human reason.

Such is the doctrine maintained, if not first introduced into the Christian Church, by St. *Austin*, in the fourth century,—That, in consequence of Adam's transgression, all infants dying before they have done either good or evil, except the infants of the elect, will be punished with everlasting torments in the fire of Hell. Such is the doctrine of the same father (and it is a doctrine still received by many Christians) That, in consequence of Adam's transgression,

sion, human nature became so prone to evil of every kind, that it is quite impossible for any one individual of our species, either to have understanding to distinguish what is good, or will to do it, or ability to escape everlasting damnation. Such is the doctrine maintained by *Calvin* (and still supported by many)—That God, before the creation of Adam, and without any respect whatever to their future obedience or disobedience to his will, did, by an arbitrary and unchangeable decree, doom certain individuals of the human race to everlasting happiness, and other individuals to everlasting misery, in another world. Such also is the doctrine expressed in the Text. It is a doctrine of our Church; but it is rejected by many, who are neither enemies to our Church, nor to the Christian Religion.

On a former occasion, I endeavoured from this place to establish, by a close and logical argumentation, the credibility of miraculous events; and on this I must bespeak your indulgence, if, at some

length, I endeavour to shew that this doctrine is not repugnant to human reason.

The chief difficulty attending the doctrine concerning the sacrifice of Christ, arises from our inadequate conceptions of the moral government of God. Now these conceptions must ever continue to be inadequate; for the most exalted human faculties are limited within very narrow bounds, even in such things as fall within the observation of our senses, or are capable of historical testimony, or admit the evidence of intuition and demonstration; and they reach not at all to the inscrutable proceedings of the Almighty Cause of every thing. I do not take upon myself to explain the doctrine of Redemption, by removing every difficulty which may occur to a reflecting mind concerning it; but, as it is a great obstruction in the way of serious inquirers after truth, in spiritual concerns, it is our duty to endeavour to render it as little offensive as possible, consistently with reason and with Scripture. With reason, because nothing can, nothing

ought to be admitted and believed, as a scripture doctrine, which is clearly contrary to reason:—With Scripture, because every thing may and ought to be admitted and believed, which is clearly revealed therein, how much soever it may surpass the comprehension of our reason. "Christ "crucified, was to the Jews a stumbling-"block, and to the Greeks foolishness:" —that a crucified man should be an object of adoration, and a Saviour of mankind, is still foolishness to many amongst ourselves; not merely to those who, from levity of mind, from profligacy of manners, from ignorance of the subject, presume to ridicule the doctrines of our holy religion; but to intelligent and well-disposed men, who wish to receive the Gospel as a rule of conduct in this life, and as the only rock of their hope in another.—I begin with obviating some difficulties relative to that transaction which rendered redemption necessary—The fall of Man.

Was it not unjust, it has been asked, that the whole human race should have

been made subject to death because Adam transgressed a divine command? I answer, No. For in what does injustice consist, except in not rendering to every man what is his due? Now the whole human race had not, when Adam transgressed, any dues; there would have been no injustice, had it never been brought into existence, and nothing could have been due to what might without injustice have never been. It pleased God that, notwithstanding the transgression of Adam, the human race should exist; but Cain, the first-born of that race, could not accuse God of injustice in not giving him that immortality which his father had lost; and for this plain reason he could not accuse him, because Adam himself had no absolute right to that immortality, and the conditional right which God had given him he forfeited by disobedience; and his posterity could have no just claim to what he no longer possessed, to what, before they were born, he had no title to, either absolute or conditional, natural or covenanted.

Why,

Why, it has been asked, did not God make Adam incapable of sinning? This question may be properly answered by another—Is it possible to make a free agent incapable of sinning? Freedom of choice seems to imply a possibility, at least, of chusing amiss; and a wrong choice being followed by a wrong action, a possibility of sinning seems to be inseparable from a freedom of chusing; I say seems to be; for I would not speak positively on a subject so much above my comprehension: Whether every created Being may not be capable of disobeying the Creator, is a question beyond our power of reason to decide; but we learn from Scripture, not only that man sinned, but that "the Angels kept not their first "estate."

But why did God give free agency to Adam, when he knew that it would be abused by him to the ruin of himself and of his posterity? He gave it, we presume, for this reason; because he knew that more good would ultimately accrue to humankind

humankind from the use, than evil from the abuse, of free agency. This answer may properly be extended to a question of great intricacy, which has perplexed the minds of all thinking men in all ages —Whence comes evil, natural and moral? Whence, but from the goodness of God, who admits the existence of minute degrees of evil, that he may not exclude the existence of great degrees of good. We may not, on every occasion, be able to discover the necessity of the connexion between partial evil and general good; yet we see this connexion established in so many instances, that we ought from analogy to infer it's existence in all.

Pain, disease, death, from natural or accidental causes, constitute a certain quantity of natural evil—pleasure, health, life, from the same causes, constitute a certain quantity of good. The evil and the good necessarily spring from those laws of matter and motion, to which we and all other animals inhabiting this earth are now subjected; nor, whilst these laws subsist,

subsist, is it possible that the evil could have been avoided and yet the good produced; they must of necessity both exist together; and if the good outweighs the evil (as it unquestionably does, if we take into consideration the whole of any species) we may be certain that a benevolent Being is the author of both.

Unanimated matter is incapable of either pleasure or pain; it cannot be the subject of either good or evil. But all the parts of this terraqueous globe, and the air which surrounds it, are filled with various species of animals, all of them, collectively taken, deriving pleasure from their existence. Now pleasurable sensations are a positive good derived from God having animated a certain portion of matter; the quantity of this good we know not how to estimate, but we do know the source from which it springs—it is produced by the will of a benevolent Being; for, had the Being which produced it, been malevolent, he would have produced a preponderance not of good but of evil.

Being

Being certain, then, from the things which are made, that benevolence is the attribute of the God who made them, we have the strongest reason to believe that no natural evil exists in his works, which could have been prevented without the loss of a greater good; for if the smallest degree of it did subsist which could have been prevented without losing a greater good, malevolence and not benevolence would have been predicable concerning Him who made every thing.

As to moral evil, the subject may be considered in the following manner. Though I agree with the most acute of all reasoners—that there are no innate principles, speculative or practical, yet an appetency of pleasure, and an aversion from pain, seem to be innate propensities in us, and in all other animals; these are so interwoven with our constitution as percipient Beings, that without them an animal would not differ from a stone. But if this desire of pleasure, this aversion from pain, belong essentially to us, as men,

hope

hope of pleasure and fear of pain, must also be essential to us: and from hope and fear all our passions flow, as from their source; and from our passions all moral evil is derived. Hence, moral evil seems to be as unavoidable, in this system of things, as natural evil. But though our passions are the source of moral evil, they are also the source of moral good; and if the good outbalances the evil (as it appears to do) then also have we reason to conclude, that God will permit no portion of moral evil to exist, which can be removed without the loss of a greater good. Agreeable to this deduction of reason is the declaration of Scripture; for Isaiah introduces the Supreme Being, confuting as it were the Manichean doctrine of two principles, and saying, "I am Jehovah, "and none else; forming light, and creating darkness; making peace, and "creating evil: I Jehovah am the author "of all these things."

I have great confidence in the justness of this abstract reasoning respecting the fall

fall of our first parents, and the origin of evil; and I have introduced it, because it is perfectly applicable to the illustration of the doctrine now to be considered.

"Christ our passover is sacrified for "us:"—What, it is said, can it be consistent with divine justice that the innocent should be punished for the guilty? No; it is not consistent with justice, either human or divine, that the innocent should be punished for the guilty; for punishment is annexed to transgression; and, where there is perfect innocence there is no transgression; and where there is no transgression, there cannot, properly speaking, be any punishment.

But though it should be admitted, that the humiliation and the crucifixion of Christ cannot be properly denominated punishments, yet it must be allowed that the endurance of them was a great evil; and the question recurs—Can it be consistent with divine justice that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, the just for the unjust, a sinless Saviour for a sinful world?

On

On such a subject as the redemption of the world from death, through the death of the Son of God, all reference to human transactions, by way of comparison, must give a very inadequate conception of either the justice, the utility or the necessity of the dispensation; yet such reference is not wholly improper, by way of illustration; it may render our ideas more definite and precise.

When we read of *Curtius* or of the *Decii* voluntarily devoting themselves to destruction, for, as they believed, the preservation of their country, we do not accuse the Roman magistracy of injustice in permitting them to do so. When we hear of *Pylades* the friend of *Orestes*, of *Pythias* the friend of *Damon*, of *Cavendish* the friend of *Russel*, of men severally ready to lay down their lives for their respective friends, we never think of accusing God of injustice in having given to human nature sympathy so acute, benevolence so exalted;—and shall we accuse Him for having given to "the Son of his Love," to "the

" the image of Himself," to " the first-born " of every creature," a degree of benevolence superior to what he hath given to the lowest of the rational creation? Benevolence is the most endearing attribute of human nature, of angelic nature, of God himself: we may admire the wisdom, we may dread the power, we may revere the justice, we may honour the holiness, of a superior Being; but it is the benevolence of such a Being that binds us to him with cords of gratitude and affection; and we justly expect, we reasonably hope to find, that attribute most conspicuous in the most exalted natures. When we observe parents or children, husbands or wives, willingly submitting to much bodily fatigue, suffering much mental uneasiness, sustaining a variety of evil, that they may thereby lessen the misery which indiscretion, intemperance, vice of any kind, has brought upon their relatives, we learn that the dispensation of God in permitting Christ to suffer for the benefit of mankind is so far from being repugnant to his justice, that

that it is in perfect correspondence with the ordinary course of his providence. You may perhaps object, that in these instances of the natural course of things, the sufferance of the innocent individual is voluntary, but that the sufferance of Christ was compulsatory. He who makes this objection is in an error; the sufferance of Christ was perfectly voluntary. Hear his own declaration—"Therefore doth my Father love me, "because I lay down my life, that I might "take it again. No man taketh it from "me, but I lay it down of myself: I have "power to lay it down, and I have power "to take it again."

But, it is asked—Might not God have forgiven the original transgression of Adam and the actual sins of his posterity, without the intervention of the Blood of Christ? What God might or might not have done, becomes not man to say; he always does what is best and fittest to be done, but we are incompetent judges of what that is. In the jewish dispensation,

there "was no remission of sins without the shedding of blood;" but we do not presume to affirm, that God could not have remitted the sins of his people without the shedding of blood. Whether God could, consistently with the general good of his whole creation, have forgiven the sins of mankind, had not Christ died for the ungodly, we know not; but this we do know (for the Scripture hath said it,) that "God for Christ's sake (or, *through* Christ) hath forgiven us." Let this degree of knowledge content us; it is enough for every useful purpose, it is sufficient to animate our hopes of immortality, and to stimulate us to holiness of life.

It is contrary to the benignity of the divine nature to admit any degree of evil into his works, unless the admission of it be productive of a degree of good superior to the evil. But who will presume to say, that the *voluntary* death of Christ is not productive of a degree of good surpassing that degree of evil which attended

attended it? Who will presume to say, that God, after Adam's transgression, could have raised Adam's Progeny to eternal life without any medium of their salvation, or with any other medium than that which he made use of? He who, with unlimited power, wills an end, wills also the means of attaining that end. God willed the liberation of the human race from that death which Adam had brought upon it; and he willed the voluntary death of Christ as the mean of attaining that liberation. Now, do we not extend our reasoning beyond our capacity, when we inquire why God fixed upon that mean rather than any other? We might with equal reason inquire why God did not create man millions of ages before he created Adam?—why he did not make him a more perfect being?—why he did not make all orders of being with the highest possible degrees of perfection?—why he does not sustain man without the intervention of food? These, and innumerable questions such as

these, are as incapable of being solved, and as improperly proposed by us, as why he gave his only-begotten Son to be the Saviour of the world. It becomes us, and all other created beings, humbly to acquiesce in whatever God does, and to do whatever he commands, with a firm confidence that all his dispensations tend to the production of the greatest possible good to the whole creation. This acquiescence is certainly our duty in all cases; God however permits us the use of our reason, and it is never employed to better purpose, than in deducing his attributes from a contemplation of his works; we err only when we set reason in opposition to His word, refusing to believe what we are unable to comprehend.

But, it is asked, does the word of God require us to believe that Christ was a real sacrifice for sin? Christian brethren, hear, I beseech you, what the word of God says on this most important article of Christian faith; hear, and judge for yourselves.

yourselves. Before Christ was born, he was named by an Angel "Jesus;" which being interpreted, is Saviour: "for he "shall *save* his people from their sins." Christ himself tells us, that "the Son "of Man came to give his life a ransom "for many," or, as the original might be translated, "a ransom for all." And again he says—"This is my blood of the "New Testament (or covenant) which "is shed for many for the remission of "sins." And again he says, "I am the "good shepherd, and I lay down my life "for the sheep." St. Paul declares—that "Christ gave himself for us, an "offering and a sacrifice to God." Peter tells us, that "Christ suffered for sins, the "just for the unjust, that he might bring "us to God." John affirms—that "God "sent his Son to be the propitiation for "our sins." The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, that "Christ "needeth not daily, as those high priests, "to offer up sacrifice, first for his own "sins, and then for the people's: for this

"he did once, when he offered up him-
"self." I think it needless to produce more texts on this point, since from the beginning of Matthew's Gospel to the end of the Revelation, Christ is every where spoken of as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—as the Lamb that took away the sins of the world—as an offering for sin."

I am not ignorant that a figurative meaning has been given to all these texts of Scripture, on which the real Sacrifice of Christ is founded; but I must own that I dare not embrace this figurative interpretation of Scripture, unless in cases where a literal interpretation is impossible; and I do not see any impossibility attending the literal meaning of Christ having voluntarily laid down his life for the salvation of mankind. Those who object to this literal meaning, as inconsistent with the justice and benignity of the divine nature, have not, I think, sufficiently attended to the circumstance of the death of Christ being voluntary—

had

had he, indeed, been involuntarily deprived of the glory which he had with God before the foundation of the world; had he been indignantly thrown by his Father on this earthly scene of sin and sorrow, reluctantly nailed to the cross, forcibly compelled to bear our sins on the tree; then it must be owned that our opinion of the rectitude of the divine administration might have been staggered, and we might anxiously have had recourse to a figurative interpretation in order to reconcile the ways of God to our notions of his justice and benevolence; though even on that supposition we ought rather to have distrusted the extent of our intellectual faculties, than presumed to question the attributes of our Maker. Does it become an insect of a day to question the wisdom of a man? How much less does it become a man to question the wisdom of the eternal God!

It is argued by those who oppose the doctrine of Christ being a real propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world,

that " in the New Testament we are said to be justified freely by the grace of God. Now certainly, they add, if the favour had been procured by the suffering of another person, it could not have been said to have been bestowed freely." This reasoning does not appear to me to be just. The appointment and acceptance of any medium whatever, by which mankind might obtain eternal life, was the free gift, the grace, the favour of God. He might, consistently with justice, have left the human race in that state of eternal death to which Adam had reduced it; but he was pleased, out of his great love, and unpurchased bounty, to justify us freely—freely, but not unconditionally; he required, as the conditions of our justification, a voluntary sacrifice on the part of Christ, and on our part repentance from evil works, and faith in the blood of his Son. This distinction may be easily understood. When a king, from the great benignity of his nature, grants a pardon to a criminal, the pardon is not

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less a free gift, from it's being accompanied with the conditions of something being done by another in favour of the criminal, and of something being done by the criminal himself, before he can avail himself of the mercy which is offered to him. The passage of Scripture on which the objection is founded, when fully quoted, stands thus: "Being justified freely by "his grace (God's favour) through the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom "God hath set forth to be a propitiation, "through Faith in his Blood."

The doctrine of the Bible with respect to the ruin and recovery of mankind, when briefly expressed, seems to be this—Adam sinned by trangressing a divine command, and by that transgression brought death upon himself and all his posterity; and hence we justly collect God's extreme displeasure against disobedience to his will. The reason of such displeasure we cannot conceive to be any cruel, proud, vindictive passion in God; for it is quite contrary to reason to attribute

attribute human passions to the divine nature; but we humbly suppose that it may proceed from his certain knowledge that misery must, by a necessary consequence, ever attend disobedience to his will.

Christ transgressed no divine command, but in all things obeyed the will of God, and by his obedience obtained for human-kind that eternal life which had been lost by Adam; and hence we justly collect God's pleasure (for, humanly speaking, pleasure and displeasure may be attributed to God) in the perfect obedience of his creatures to his will; and we humbly suppose that this pleasure proceeds from his certain knowledge that happiness must, by a necessary consequence, ever attend obedience to his will.

We all may be said, in a certain sense, to have sinned in Adam, inasmuch as we all suffer death from his disobedience; and we all may be said, in a certain sense, to be justified in Christ, inasmuch as we all, through his obedience, are

made alive,—brought into a capacity of obtaining that immortal life which, through Adam's disobedience, we were not unjustly deprived of. I have said, "brought into a capacity of obtaining immortal life;" but the actual possession of that life is conditional—it depends, as Adam's possession of it did, on our obedience to the will of God; and in case of disobedience, on our sincere repentance, and on our trust in the mediation of Christ. Should any one ask, why repentance is necessary for our acquiring possession of eternal life? The answer is obvious—Repentance is a change of mind, producing a change of conduct; and it does not seem fit, it is not perhaps possible, that our sins should be forgiven when they are not forsaken. But why must we trust in the mediation of Christ? Because the Scripture hath told us—that "if any man sin, we have "an advocate with the Father, Jesus "Christ the righteous;"—and that "there "is one mediator between God and men, "the

"the man Christ Jesus," whom God sent to be "a propitiation for our sins." But you do not understand how Christ can become a propitiation for our sins—the fact however may be so, though you do not understand the reason of it, and the Scripture expressly says that it is so; and you will do unwisely if, rejecting the word of God, you rely upon reason in a matter certainly not contrary to it's dictates, but above it's comprehension.

You perceive, brethren, from what has been said, that the opinion of the speaker leans to that of those who give a literal rather than a figurative interpretation to those texts which represent Christ—as laying down his life for his sheep—as purchasing the Church with his blood—as putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself. There are many other men, both in this and in other countries, of great piety, probity, and learning, who reject a literal interpretation as irreconcileably hostile to the justice, the benignity, the holiness of the Almighty.

Both

Both of these two classes of Christians cannot be free from error, for two contradictory propositions cannot both be true; but it is not, I trust, a profane presumption to hope that both of them may, in the sight of God, be free from blame. He, and He alone, knows the extent of our individual talents, the strength of our prejudices, the rise and progress of our habits of thinking; and therefore He, and He alone, can tell to whom the innocence or the culpability of error is justly to be imputed.

Suffer me, in conclusion, to exhort you, not to permit a diversity in opinion, on this or on any other religious doctrine, to generate in you either an indifference towards all religious persuasions, or a bigoted attachment to your own: for indifference generally ends in unbelief, and bigotry begins in ignorance or in interest, and always ends in self-sufficiency and intolerance.

In natural philosophy, in moral philosophy, in every branch of human learning,

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as well as in revealed religion, difficulties, occasioning diversities of opinion, subsist; but he would be a bad logician, who should infer that nothing was certain because something was questionable in each of them—that facts could not be established, because opinions could not be reconciled.

The truth of the Christian Religion is founded in historical facts, and especially in the fact of the Resurrection of Christ; of the truth of past facts men may, by proper investigation, become competent judges, though they may not be able to comprehend "the depth of the riches and wisdom of God," in having delivered up Jesus to be crucified and slain by wicked hands.

The religious disputes which have for so many ages disturbed the peace of the christian world, respect the modes and circumstances of things, rather than matters essential to the working out our salvation. Whilst we believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and that we also

also shall be raised from the dead and made to give an account of our conduct, we are impelled by the strongest motives to the practice of holiness, "without "which we cannot see the Lord." In the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "May the God of peace that brought "again from the dead our Lord Jesus, "that great Shepherd of the sheep, "through the blood of the everlasting "covenant, make you perfect in every "good work to do his will, working in "you that which is well pleasing in his "sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom "be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*"

SERMON V.

Preached before the Stewards of the Westminster Dispensary, at their Anniversary Meeting, in Charlotte-street Chapel, April 1785:—With an APPENDIX, 1793. [4th Edit.]

PROV. xxii. 2.

THE RICH AND THE POOR MEET TOGETHER: THE LORD IS THE MAKER OF THEM ALL.

IT would be foreign to the purpose of this meeting to enter into a disquisition concerning the origin of property—Suffice it to observe, that it is a state of things which has taken place in every age and country of which we have any account: even the savage inhabitants of the uncultivated parts of the world, who derive their support from the casual success of

of the chace, have their separate districts for hunting; and an infringement of that species of property is one of the chief causes of their barbarous hostilities. Amongst all civilized nations, the security of property constitutes one of the principal branches of their jurisprudence. From a state of property, however introduced, springs up a division of mankind into two classes, one possessing more, the other possessing less, or nothing at all: the more and the less may vary through a great many degrees, yet the division still remains certain; and the consequent distinction of mankind into Poor and Rich has been generally established. It is not possible to fix any precise mark by which these two classes may be discriminated from each other. We might, indeed, agree to call that man rich, who had any thing which strictly speaking was his own; and that man poor, who had no property at all: yet this would be a distinction opposite, in many instances, to our general notions; for he who can

maintain himself by his manual labour or ingenuity, is often esteemed, and justly esteemed, richer than he who is possessed of a trifling property in land, money, or goods.

God gave the earth to be a means of support to the whole human race; and we have all of us a right to be maintained by what it produces: but he never meaned that the idle should live upon the labour of the industrious, or that the flagitious should eat the bread of the righteous: he hath therefore permitted a state of property to be every where introduced; that the industrious might enjoy the rewards of their diligence; and that those who would not work, might feel the punishment of their laziness. In the Jewish government, which was formed according to the especial appointment of God, he suffered some to sell their property, and others to buy it; some to become poor, and others to become rich. He appointed, indeed, that the land which had been sold out of any family

family should, in the year of the Jubilee, return to that family again; but, even under this constitution, a man might reduce himself and his family to beggary for fifty years. And that many, either through misfortune or mismanagement, would actually become poor, even in the Jewish state, which was peculiarly calculated to preserve an equality of possession, was so naturally to be expected, that God expressly said—*The poor should never cease out of the land.*

This division of mankind into poor and rich, is of all others the most general; indeed it ultimately comprehends the rest. Men are sometimes classed into different orders, according to the diversity of the professions or trades which they pursue; but the end aimed at, by men of every profession and every trade, is to advance themselves from a state of poverty to a state of riches, or from the possession of a smaller portion of wealth to that of a larger. Men, on the other hand, are addicted to various vices, and pursue

a strange multiplicity of follies; but the usual end of both vice and folly is to reduce men from riches to poverty. It may be truly said, that all the pursuits of mankind, whether they be laudable or disreputable, have a natural tendency to introduce a disparity of property; to establish the great distinction of the human species into rich and poor. This distinction, arising, as it were necessarily, from the situations and dispositions of mankind, cannot be otherwise considered than as the natural appointment of God himself—*The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.* The Lord hath made every thing for the best; all his dispensations are the result of his wisdom, and the fruit of his goodness: let us try whether it may not be shewn that this, amongst the rest, springs from the same sources.

I need employ no time in persuading the Rich that this is a very good system of things; they feel, or they fancy that they feel, the advantages resulting from an

an unequal distribution of property, and would be sorry to have any change made in this matter. The chief difficulty will be to reconcile the poorer sort to their lot; yet I cannot help thinking that, if they will divest themselves of prejudice, they will see reason to be perfectly contented with their condition, and be satisfied that things could not have been better ordered.

In the first place then it may be observed that, in this country at least, slavery is not allowed; would to God that it existed no where! Every man amongst us is equally capable of acquiring property; the reward of his industry and frugality cannot be ravished from him by the tyranny of an unfeeling master: through the faults or the misfortunes of his progenitors he may have been born in a low situation, but it must be through his own if he continues in it. Honesty, diligence, and frugality, will go a great way in lifting him, if not to much eminence, at least above indigence, and

it may be to opulence. We see this frequently happening; those who have been upright and careful servants often becoming reputable masters and distinguished citizens; and that it does not happen oftener, is not so much to be attributed to the difficulty of the thing itself, as to the little pains men take to accomplish it. The golden crown of diligence and economy is held out as a prize to all; every one who runs may reach it: but if, instead of running with alacrity and circumspection the appointed course, we loiter away our time, suffering ourselves to be carried from the pursuit by every little allurement of idleness or pleasure, whom have we to blame but ourselves? He who is idle and extravagant in his youth, who will not bow down his body to labour, or who labours but just enough to pamper his body in riotous living, as thousands of manufacturers do, wasting in three days of beastly drunkenness what they have acquired by four days of industry, this man has no right to

to complain if he finds his old age destitute and comfortless, if he remains through life in the state of poverty in which he was born. There is scarcely any old person but must confess that he might have brought up his family with credit, without being burthensome to the parish, had he from his earliest youth used his best diligence in acquiring property, and his utmost caution in not needlessly parting with it: so that it must be owned this unequal distribution of property is a great spur to industry and frugality in the lower classes of life; and habits of industry and frugality bring with them modesty, humility, temperance, indeed so many virtues, that a finer system could not perhaps have been possibly formed, for exalting human nature, for bringing men to a right understanding of their duty, to a reverence for whatever is good and praiseworthy.

A second consideration of great weight in this matter is, that the Poor would be no gainers by an equal distribution of

property: the Rich indeed might be losers by it, they might be deprived of some superfluities; but the Poor would not be better provided with necessaries. For if all men were upon a level, he who is now doomed to labour must labour still; he must still continue to plough the ground, to thrash the corn, to dig the fuel, to work at the loom, the anvil, and the mill; he would still have occasion for food, fire and clothing; and he could not expect that, in this so much and so wrongly admired state of equality, another would undertake to procure these articles for him. At present the Poor have a property in little but their labour; they are forced to labour for their subsistence; and if things were brought upon a level, I do not apprehend how they could procure subsistence without labour. They may wish perhaps to change situations with the Rich, but such a change is not the case in point; the present Rich would then become the Poor, and would have an equal right to demand an alteration in

in their favour. The object of inquiry is, whether the Poor would be in any-wise bettered, by having the lands of this or any other country equally divided amongst it's inhabitants; and it seems to me that they would not.—Let us look at this matter in another light. The Rich cannot either eat or drink more viands than other men; their bodies are not above the common size, nor do they require any extraordinary quantity of covering to protect them from the inclemency of the seasons; upon any supposition of property they must be fed and clothed: they are at present fed somewhat more deliciously, and clothed somewhat more sumptuously than other men are; but this seems not to be either any real advantage to them, or disadvantage to others. The fortunes of the Rich are expended in superfluities, in things not necessary either for the being, or the well-being of the human race; and in being thus expended, they are dispersed amongst the Poor in a thousand ways.

Every

Every elegant entertainment which a man gives, every costly suit which he puts on, every magnificent building which he erects, every means by which he expends his property, are blessings to the Poor, and reduce things as it were to a level. The rich man in all this may probably but consult his vanity, or gratify his appetite: he may have no thought about the Poor in what he does, yet the effect is the same as if he did think of them; and thousands are more comfortably maintained by administering to the real or artificial wants of the Rich, than they could be upon the taking place of an equal partition of property.

A third argument, to induce the Poor to be contented with their situations, arises from the little contentment which rich men seem to have in theirs. Man consists of two parts, body and mind: idleness is the bane of both; the body, by indolence, becomes enervated, unequal to fatigue, and prone to disease; if the wind blows freshly on it, or the sun

happens to scorch it, or the rain to wet it, it's languid possessor is filled with no causeless apprehension of succeeding maladies, and life itself is often endangered by the disaster. An idle mind is still a more troublesome companion than an idle body; it preys upon itself, becomes peevish and discontented; or else it exerts a sort of activity in trifles, is eager in the pursuit of fashionable follies, insipid amusements, or ruinous vices. Riches exempt the body from the wholesome fatigue of labour, and the mind from the no less salutary fatigue of thought, and frequently become the cause of complete ruin to the whole man. There are many men of great wealth and distinguished rank in our own, and in every other country, with bodies so shattered by debauchery, and minds so debased by folly, that a healthy day-labourer would not wish to exchange situations with them. These evils do not necessarily attend riches: we have some illustrious examples of men, who enjoy

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their wealth with temperance and good sense; yet the contrary happens so frequently, that a poor man has little cause to quarrel with his poverty, since there is a great chance that, had he been richer, he would have been less happy in himself, a less comfort to his family, less pleasing to God, and less useful to mankind.

A fourth argument, in support of the rectitude of this unequal distribution of property, may be taken from the equality with which God has dispensed the chief ingredients of human happiness. If, indeed, you place the happiness of life in drinking delicious wines, in wearing expensive apparel, in being attended by numerous servants, in exhibiting a great show of magnificence to the world, in feeding your pride and pampering your sensuality, then may you wish for riches; but you will certainly make a wrong judgment of what is for your good; none of these things have any real worth in them, and those who possess them will tell

tell you so. The main blessings which constitute the supreme felicity of human life, are within the reach of almost every one of us. The laws of the country secure to the meanest the object of the Apostle's contentment, food and raiment; and the God of nature has given us air, and light, and sleep, the warmth of the sun, and the dew of Heaven: these are the things essential to our well-being, and of these we have all an equal share.

Thus, whether we consider the unequal distribution of property as the mother of industry, and of those many mild and modest virtues which adorn our nature; or whether we respect the little advantage which the lowest class would hope to obtain, were all things brought upon a level; or look at the little solid comfort which riches seem to bring to their possessors, and the great evils to which they expose them; or lastly, reflect upon the general blessings which God has bestowed with a liberal hand upon us all; we may see reason enough to admire his wisdom,

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and to adore his goodness, for having made both rich and poor; "the rich "and the poor meet together: the Lord "is the maker of them all."

It remains that I say a word or two, more particularly suited to the purpose of our meeting; and nothing can be more suitable than to pursue the subject we are upon, by briefly stating the respective duties of the Rich and Poor: they are met together by God's appointment; and it is his will that they discharge with cheerfulness and fidelity the duties of their respective stations.

The first duty which the Rich owe towards the Poor, is to see that they want not the means necessary for the preservation of life. All the laws in the world can never justly appropriate the earth and it's productions to such a degree as that any living soul must perish for want of them. By whatever compact, tacit or express, you suppose your property to have first commenced, or to have been afterwards secured to you, it is still not yours in cases of

of extreme necessity; life is the gift of God, and in giving life he gave the means to sustain it, and no human jurisdiction can acquire any right to deprive us of this first gift of Heaven. But though it be here contended, that no man can have so exclusive a property in his goods, as with justice to debar the Poor from partaking with him in cases of extreme necessity, yet let it be well remembered, that no sanction is thereby given to theft and rapine, nor any encouragement to idleness; those who can labour ought to do it, and those who cannot labour are not at liberty to purloin by stealth, or seize by violence, what is necessary for their support; the law has provided it for them; they have a right to demand it at the hands of the magistrate, and he will fail in his duty if he does not see that it is properly supplied to them. Perhaps it may be thought an hard case, that you an honest and industrious man, possessed of little more property than what is sufficient for the maintenance of your own family, should

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be compelled to contribute towards that of those who have wasted their substance in riotous living, and are reduced to poverty through their own prodigality. There is, it must be owned, some hardship in this case; but every human institution has it's defects, and is liable to abuse: it is possible now and then that a very unworthy member may be supported by the rates of your parish, but he is still your fellow-creature, and has a right to live; he is sick, infirm, aged, some how or other incapable of labour; and, whatever may have been his past conduct, he is now become a certain object of compassion.

The duty next in importance to the supplying the Poor with the means of preserving life, is the treating them with a fellow-feeling kindness. Nothing breaks the heart of those who are bowed down by misfortune, so much as the insolence of those who are above them. This is of all the kinds of pride the most senseless and inhuman. Without a diversity of ranks the affairs of this world cannot well

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go on; some there must be to perform the more servile offices of life; but their nature is not debased by the baseness of their condition; they are not transformed to beings of an inferior order, by being destined to an inferior station; they are still our brethren in Christ, children of the same heavenly Father, and heirs of the same heavenly promises with the richest of the sons of men; and as to their earthly condition, they are still of the same shape with ourselves, they have the same senses, are equally susceptible of pleasure and pain, are sprung from the same stock, composed of the same materials, liable to the same accidents, subject to the same disorders, and in a few years will be hidden in the bosom of the same earth, and reduced to similar masses of corruption. Thou, whose heart is lifted up because of thy riches, and who in the might of thy power despisest the Poor, and refusest to relieve his distress, and makest light of his sufferings; think of the catastrophe which awaits thee, and

be not deceived by the pride of thine heart!

It must not, however, be thought that the Rich are the only persons who have duties to perform, and that the Poor may urge the misery of their lot as an excuse for the neglect of theirs: I will briefly mention three duties which especially belong to them.

First, The Poor owe to the Rich gratitude, thankfulness, and respect, for all the good they receive from them. If their wants are not supplied to the extent which they may wish, it does not become them to be transported with resentment against their richer neighbours, nor presently to pour forth calumnies and complaints as if there was no charity amongst mankind. Charity is often a private virtue known only to a man's self; and he who refuses to give an alms is not therefore to be censured, by the object that solicits it, as an hard-hearted man: he may have a call for all he can spare, which you know not of; and it may be his charity is better placed than

in relieving you: if it is otherwise, the matter is between God and himself; you are no judge of it; you will do no good by murmuring; you will deservedly find the door of mercy fast bolted against yourself.—Another duty of the Poor is foresight. They ought in their years of youth and strength to make some provision against the wants of old age, and not encourage themselves in expensive doings whilst they are young, from the assurance of having a legal support provided for them when they grow old. They must not in a spirit of hypocrisy make a greater shew of distress than they really feel, lest they should thereby dry up the streams of general benevolence, or divert them from refreshing those who are in real want. They must not in a spirit of idleness neglect any opportunity of being honestly employed, but they are to work with quietness as much as they are able; for it is the Apostle's command, "If any will not work, neither let him eat." When the hand of industry is disabled by

accident, enfeebled by disease, palsied by old age, any how rendered incapable of supporting it's master, then and not till then should it be stretched out to receive the contributions of the benevolent; and then we trust it will never be drawn back empty.

A third duty of the Poor is not to give way to either envy or despair. There is nothing indeed in the situation of rich men, if the matter be rightly considered, which can become a subject of envy; and if their means of happiness were less exceptionable than they seem to be, yet have they as great a right to enjoy them, and probably will make as good an use of them, as the poor man would do, who looks upon every station above him as his due, regarding with a malignant eye what he cannot attain: and as to despair, there is no need why any one should give way to that; when he is in the worst possible situation, he has the providence of God for his protection, and this will assuredly work out something for his relief, unless by

by wickedness or despondency he counteracts the efficacy of it's benign influence.

Lastly, It is the duty of us all, Rich and Poor, to be kindly affectioned one towards another, well keeping in mind that we are all travellers on the same road, all servants of the same Master, all accountable to him for every step we take, all of us entrusted with his property; and if he hath given more to some, and less to others, it is not out of partiality towards any of us, but that he might make trial of our temper, and see how we were disposed to treat each other in the use of what he hath given us. Were all men upon a level, there would be no room for the exercise of charity and compassion on the one hand, nor of patience and gratitude on the other; the Rich not being called upon to part with his property, would not know whether he was the servant of Mammon or of God. In a word, the unequal distribution of this world's goods, is a state most admirably fitted for the producing in mankind the

great Christian virtues of content, patience, meekness, of universal benevolence, compassion, and good-will, without which, though we should possess the whole world, we shall certainly lose our own souls; and with which, though we should possess nothing at all in this world, we shall certainly have, which is the main thing to be considered by us all, never ending happiness in that which is to come.

An occasion is now offered to those who abound in this world's goods to shew the benignity of their tempers; and it is an occasion which is liable to no exception. Medicine is not palatable; no one will apply for it who can do without it; nor will any one use it longer than he wants it: there will be no fictitious claims on your benevolence; no waste in the application of your bounty. I need not weary your attention in enlarging on the utility of the Institution, which hath hitherto prospered in your hands: it is universally acknowledged; it is spoken

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ill of by none but those who do not understand it; thousands of Individuals have had cause to bless you, and the State itself is indebted to you for the life of every individual which has been saved to the community through your munificence. But it is not from the State that you must expect the reward of your well-doing, the blessings of the Poor will be your passports to Heaven; God himself will reward you, and not suffer any one instance of your kindness to your fellow-creatures to be forgotten at the dreadful day of retribution. It is a day which is at hand to many of us, which is approaching with an hasty and unheeded pace upon us all! In that day the pride of learning will be abased, the towerings of ambition will be brought low, the insolence of wealth will be subdued, all the mighty din and bustle of the world will cease, and nothing will remain to comfort us but the remembrance of the good which we have done. It behoves us all to think soberly, seriously,

and frequently of the event of that day; and if that reflection should not be sufficient to dispose our hearts to further such a work of mercy as now solicits our protection, all human means of exciting our compassion would be vain: we ought to pray to God, with all possible sincerity, that he would remove from us that hardness of heart, that contempt of his word, that insensibility of our spiritual danger which threatens our eternal perdition; for unquestionably we are in the gall of bitterness, and our end will not be in peace.

APPENDIX.

THE Sermon which is now (1793) for the first time published, was written many years ago; it may, perhaps, on that account be more worthy of the attention of those for whose benefit it is designed. If it shall have any effect in calming

calming the perturbation which has been lately excited, and which still subsists in the minds of the lower classes of the community, I shall not be ashamed of having given to the world a composition in every other light uninteresting. I will take this opportunity of adding, with the same intention, a few Reflections on the present circumstances of our own, and of a neighbouring country.

With regard to France—I have no hesitation in declaring, that the object which the French seemed to have in view at the commencement of their revolution, had my hearty approbation. The object was to free themselves and their posterity from arbitrary power. I hope there is not a man in Great Britain so little sensible of the blessings of that free constitution under which he has the happiness to live, so entirely dead to the interests of general humanity, as not to wish that a constitution similar to our own might be established, not only in France, but in every despotic State

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in Europe; not only in Europe, but in every quarter of the globe.

It is one thing to approve of an end, another to approve of the means by which an end is accomplished. I did not approve of the means by which the first revolution was effected in France—I thought that it would have been a wiser measure to have abridged the oppressive privileges, and to have lessened the enormous number of the nobility, than to have abolished the order—I thought that the State ought not in justice to have seized any part of the property of the church, till it had reverted, as it were, to the community, by the death of it's immediate possessors—I thought that the king was not only treated with unmerited indignity, but that too little authority was left him, to enable him, as the chief executive magistrate, to be useful to the State.—These were some of my reasons for not approving the means by which the first revolution in France was brought about. As to other evils which

which took place on the occasion, I considered them certainly as evils of importance; but at the same time as evils inseparable from a state of civil commotion, and which I conceived would be more than compensated by the establishment of a limited monarchy.

The French have abandoned the constitution they had at first established, and have changed it for another. No one can reprobate with more truth than I do, both the means and the end of this change.—The end has been the establishment of a republic—Now a republic is a form of goverment, which, of all others, I most dislike—and I dislike it for this reason; because of all forms of government, scarcely excepting the most despotic, I think a republic the most oppressive to the bulk of the people: they are deceived in it, with the show of liberty; but they live in it, under the most odious of all tyrannies, the tyranny of their equals.—With respect to the means by which this new republic has been erected

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in France, they have been sanguinary, savage, more than brutal. They not merely fill the heart of every individual with commiseration for the unfortunate sufferers; but they exhibit to the eye of contemplation, an humiliating picture of human nature, when it's passions are not regulated by religion, or controlled by law.—I fly with terror and abhorrence, even from the altar of Liberty, when I see it stained with the blood of the aged, of the innocent, of the defenceless sex, of the ministers of religion, and of the faithful adherents of a fallen monarch—My heart sinks within me, when I see it streaming with the blood of the monarch himself.—Merciful God! strike speedily, we beseech thee, with deep contrition, and sincere remorse, the obdurate hearts of the relentless perpetrators and projectors of these horrid deeds, lest they should suddenly sink into eternal and extreme perdition, loaded with an unutterable weight of unrepented, and, except through the blood

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of Him whose religion they reject, inexpiable sin.

The monarch, you will tell me, was guilty of perfidy and perjury—I know not that he was guilty of either. But admitting that he has been guilty of both,—who, alas! of the sons of men, is so confident in the strength of his own virtue, so assured of his own integrity and intrepidity of character, as to be certain that, under similar temptations, he would not have been guilty of similar offences? Surely it would have been no diminution of the sternness of new republican virtue, no disgrace to the magnanimity of a great nation, if it had pardoned the perfidy which it's own oppression had occasioned—if it had remitted the punishment of the perjury of the king, to the tribunal of Him, by whom *kings reign and princes decree justice.*

And are there any men in this kingdom, except such as find their account in public confusion, who would hazard the introduction

introduction of such scenes of rapine, barbarity, and bloodshed, as have disgraced France, and outraged humanity, for the sake of obtaining—what?—Liberty and Equality.—I suspect that the meaning of these terms is not clearly and generally understood: it may be of use to explain them.

The liberty of a man in a state of nature, consists in his being subject to no law but the law of nature—and the liberty of a man in a state of society, consists in his being subject to no law, but to the law enacted by the general will of the society to which he belongs. —And to what other law is any man in Great Britain subject? The king, we are all justly persuaded, has not the inclination; and we all know that, if he had the inclination, he has not the power, to substitute his will in the place of the law. The house of lords has no such power; the house of commons has no such power; the church has no such power; the rich men of the country have

no

no such power. The poorest man amongst us, the beggar at our door, is governed—not by the uncertain, passionate, arbitrary will of an individual—not by the selfish insolence of an aristocratic faction—not by the madness of democratic violence—but by the fixed, impartial, deliberate voice of law, enacted by the general suffrage of a free people.—Is your property injured? Law, indeed, does not give you property; but it ascertains it.—Property is acquired by industry and probity; by the exercise of talents and ingenuity; and the possession of it is secured by the laws of the community. Against whom think you is it secured? It is secured against thieves and robbers; against idle and profligate men, who, however low your condition may be, would be glad to deprive you of the little you possess. It is secured, not only against such disturbers of the public peace, but against the oppression of the noble, the rapacity of the powerful, and the avarice of the rich. The courts

of

of British justice are impartial and incorrupt; they respect not the persons of men; the poor man's lamb is, in their estimation, as sacred as the monarch's crown; with inflexible integrity they adjudge to every man his own. Your property under their protection is secure. —If your personal liberty be unjustly restrained, though but for an hour, and that by the highest servants of the Crown —the Crown cannot screen them; the Throne cannot hide them; the law, with an undaunted arm, seizes them, and drags them with irresistible might to the judgment—of whom?—of your equals—of twelve of your neighbours.—In such a constitution as this, what is there to complain of on the score of liberty?

The greatest freedom that can be enjoyed by man in a state of civil society; the greatest security that can be given him with respect to the protection of his character, property, personal liberty, limb, and life; is afforded to every individual by our present constitution.

The

The equality of men in a state of nature, does not consist in an equality of bodily strength or intellectual ability, but in their being equally free from the dominion of each other.—The equality of men in a state of civil society, does not consist in an equality of wisdom, honesty, ingenuity, industry,—nor in an equality of property resulting from a due exertion of these talents; but in being equally subject to, equally protected by the same laws—And who knows not that every individual in this great nation is, in this respect, equal to every other? There is not one law for the nobles, another for the commons of the land—one for the clergy, another for the laity—one for the rich, another for the poor. The nobility, it is true, have some privileges annexed to their birth; the judges, and other magistrates, have some annexed to their office; and professional men have some annexed to their professions:—but these privileges are neither injurious to the liberty or property of other men.

And you might as reasonably contend, that the bramble ought to be equal to the oak; the lamb to the lion; as that no distinctions should take place between the members of the same society.—The burthens of the state are distributed through the whole community, with as much impartiality as the complex nature of taxation will admit; every man sustains a part in proportion to his strength; no order is exempted from the payment of taxes.—Nor is any order of men exclusively entitled to the enjoyment of the lucrative offices of the state. All cannot enjoy them, but all enjoy a capacity of acquiring them. The son of the meanest man in the nation may become a general or an admiral, a lord chancellor or an archbishop. If any persons have been so simple as to suppose that even the French ever intended, by the term Equality, an equality of property, they have been quite mistaken in their ideas. The French never understood by it, any thing materially different from what we

and our ancestors have been in full possession of for many ages.

Other nations may deluge their land with blood in struggling for liberty and equality; but let it never be forgotten by ourselves, and let us impress the observation upon the hearts of our children, that we are in possession of both, of as much of both as can be consistent with the end for which civil society was introduced amongst mankind.

The provision which is made for the Poor in this kingdom is so liberal, as, in the opinion of some, to discourage industry. The rental of the lands in England and Wales does not, I conjecture, amount to more than eighteen millions a year; and the poor rates amount to two millions. The Poor then, at present, possess a ninth part of the landed rental of the country; and, reckoning ten pounds for the annual maintenance of each pauper, it may be inferred, that those who are maintained by the community do not constitute a fortieth part of the people.

An equal division of land would be to the Poor a great misfortune; they would possess far less than by the laws of the land they are at present entitled to.—When we add to this consideration, an account of the immense sums annually subscribed by the Rich, for the support of hospitals, infirmaries, dispensaries—for the relief of sufferers by fire, tempests, famine, loss of cattle, great sickness, and other misfortunes; all of which charities must cease were all men on a level, for all men would then be equally poor; it cannot but excite one's astonishment that so foolish a system should have ever been so much as mentioned by any man of common sense. It is a system not practicable; and was it practicable, it would not be useful; and was it useful, it would not be just.

But some one may think, and, indeed, it has been studiously inculcated into the minds of the multitude, that a monarchy, even a limited one, is a far more expensive mode of civil government than a republic; that

that a civil list of a million a year, is an enormous sum, which might be saved to the nation. Supposing that every shilling of this sum could be saved, and that every shilling of it was expended in supporting the dignity of the crown—both which suppositions are entirely false—still should I think the liberty, the prosperity, the tranquillity, the happiness of this great nation cheaply purchased by such a sum; still should I think that he would be a madman in politics, who would, by a change of the constitution, risk these blessings (and France supplies us with a proof that infinite risk would be run) for a paltry saving of expence. I am not, nor have ever been, the patron of corruption. So far as the civil list has a tendency to corrupt the judgment of any member of either house of parliament, it has a bad tendency, which I wish it had not; but I cannot wish to see the splendour of the crown reduced to nothing, lest it's proper weight in the scale of the constitution should be thereby destroyed.

A great portion of this million is expended in paying the salaries of the judges, the interpreters of our law, the guardians of our lives and properties!—Another portion is expended in maintaining ambassadors at different courts, to protect the general concerns of the nation from foreign aggression;—another portion is expended in pensions and donations to men of letters and ingenuity; to men who have, by naval, military, or civil services, just claims to the attention of their country; to persons of respectable families and connexions, who have been humbled and broken down by misfortunes. I do not speak with accuracy, nor on such a subject is accuracy requisite; but I am not far wide of truth in saying, that a fifth part of the million is more than sufficient to defray the expences of the Royal household—What a mighty matter is it to complain of, that each individual contributes less than sixpence a year towards the support of the monarchy!

That the constitution of this country is

so

so perfect as neither to require or admit of any improvement, is a proposition to which I never did, or ever can assent; but I think it far too excellent to be amended by peasants and mechanics. I do not mean to speak of peasants and mechanics with any degree of disrespect; I am not so ignorant of the importance, either of the natural or social chain by which all the individuals of the human race are connected together, as to think disrespectfully of any link of it. Peasants and mechanics are as useful to the state as any other order of men; but their utility consists in their discharging well the duties of their respective stations: it ceases when they affect to become legislators; when they intrude themselves into concerns, for which their education has not fitted them. —The liberty of the press is a main support of the liberty of the nation; it is a blessing which it is our duty to transmit to posterity; but a bad use is sometimes made of it: and it's use is never more pernicious, than when it is employed to

infuse into the minds of the lowest orders of the community, disparaging ideas concerning the constitution of their country. No danger need be apprehended from a candid examination of our own constitution, or from a display of the advantages of any other; it will bear to be contrasted with the best: but all men are not qualified to make the comparison; and there are so many men, in every community, who wish to have no government at all, that an appeal to them on such a point ought never to be made.

There are, probably, in every government upon earth, circumstances which a man, accustomed to the abstract investigation of truth, may easily prove to be deviations from the rigid rule of strict political justice; but whilst these deviations are either generally not known, or, though known, generally acquiesced in as matters of little moment to the general felicity, I cannot think it to be the part, either of a good man, or of a good citizen, to be zealous in recommending such matters

matters to the discussion of ignorant and uneducated men.

I am far from insinuating, that the science of politics is involved in mystery; or that men of plain understandings should be debarred from examining the principles of the government, to which they yield obedience. All that I contend for is this —that the foundations of our government ought not to be overturned, nor the edifice erected thereon tumbled into ruins, because an acute politician may pretend that he has discovered a flaw in the building, or that he could have laid the foundation after a better model.

What would you say to a stranger who should desire you to pull down your house, because, forsooth, he had built one in France or America, after, what he thought, a better plan? You would say to him— No, sir—my ancestors have lived in this mansion comfortably and honourably for many generations; all it's walls are strong, and all it's timbers sound: if I should observe a decay in any of it's parts, I know

know how to make the reparation without the assistance of strangers; and I know too, that the reparation, when made by myself, may be made without injury either to the strength or beauty of the building. It has been buffeted, in the course of ages, by a thousand storms; yet still it stands unshaken as a rock, the wonder of all my neighbours, each of whom sighs for one of a similar construction. Your house may be suited to your climate and temper, this is suited to mine. Permit me, however, to observe to you, that you have not yet lived long enough in your new house, to be sensible of all the inconveniencies to which it may be liable: nor have you yet had any experience of it's strength; it has yet sustained no shocks; the first whirlwind may scatter it's component members in the air; the first earthquake may shake it's foundation; the first inundation may sweep the superstructure from the surface of the earth. I hope no accident will happen to your house, but I am satisfied with mine own.

Great

Great calamities of every kind attend the breaking up of established governments:—yet there are some forms of government, especially when they happen to be badly administered, so exceedingly destructive of the happiness of mankind, that a change of them is not improvidently purchased at the expence of the mischief accompanying their subversion. Our government is not of that kind: look round the globe, and see if you can discover a single nation on all it's surface, so powerful, so rich, so beneficent, so free and happy as our own. May Heaven avert from the minds of my Countrymen the slightest wish to abolish their Constitution!

"Kingdoms," observes Mr. Locke, "have been overturned by the pride, "ambition, and turbulency of private "men; by the people's wantonness and "desire to cast off the lawful authority of "their rulers, as well as by the rulers insolence, and endeavours to get and exercise "an arbitrary power over the people."

The

The recent danger to our constitution was in my opinion small; for I considered it's excellence to be so obvious to men even of the most unimproved understandings, that I looked upon it as an idle and fruitless effort, either in foreign or domestic incendiaries, to endeavour to persuade the bulk of the people to consent to an alteration of it in favour of a republic. I knew, indeed, that in every country the flagitious dregs of a nation were always ripe for revolutions; but I was sensible, at the same time, that it was the interest, not only of the opulent and powerful; not only of the mercantile and middle classes of life; but even of honest labourers and manufacturers, of every sober and industrious man, to resist the licentious principles of such pestilent members, shall I call them, or outcasts of society. Men, better informed and wiser than myself, thought that the constitution was in great danger. Whether in fact the danger was great or small, it is not necessary now to inquire; it may

may be more useful to declare, that, in my humble opinion, the danger, of whatever magnitude it may have been, did not originate in any encroachments of either the legislative or executive power on the liberties or properties of the people; but in the wild fancies and turbulent tempers of discontented or ill-informed individuals. I sincerely rejoice that, through the vigilance of Administration, this turbulency has received a check. The hopes of bad men have been disappointed, and the understandings of mistaken men have been enlightened, by the general and unequivocal judgment of a whole nation; a nation not more renowned for it's bravery and it's humanity, though justly celebrated for both, than for it's loyalty to it's princes, and, what is perfectly consistent with loyalty, for it's love of liberty, and attachment to the constitution. Wise men have formed it, brave men have bled for it, it is our part to preserve it.

R. Landaff.

London, Jan. 25, 1793.

SERMON VI.

Preached before The Bible Society, at St. Bride's, Fleet-street, 9th February 1800.

2 TIM. i. 10.

BUT IS NOW MADE MANIFEST BY THE APPEARANCE OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH ABOLISHED DEATH, AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL.

THE expectation of a life after this is so common a thing amongst Christians, that we are apt to think the discovery of it to be a matter of no great difficulty; we seem to suppose that all mankind are and ever have been as much persuaded of it as we ourselves are, and like the other great blessings of Providence,

Providence, such as light, and air, and rain, and food, and sleep, it is overlooked for it's being common.

Now and then, indeed, when sickness excites our attention, and our sins alarm our consciences, we endeavour to quiet their apprehensions by an expectation of a very different sort, by an hope that the nature of man is similar in all it's parts to that of the beast of the field. We see that they are both propagated in the same way, both nourished by the same food, that both grow up from infancy to maturity, that both become infirm and old, and go down into the pit together, where the bodies of both are in a short time reduced to the same principles; and hence in an evil hour we endeavour to argue ourselves into a belief, that the spirits which animate them both are of the same stamp, both annihilated by death.

This subject, of life and immortality being brought to light by the Gospel, cannot be better explained, nor the great

value

value of the new dispensation which God hath given to mankind be more forcibly illustrated, than by comparing the knowledge, in this particular, of the most unlearned person who is present in this assembly, with that of the most enlightened philosophers, who, before the promulgation of the Gospel, ever adorned the history of human kind. Is there one amongst you who entertains any doubt concerning a resurrection from the dead, a judgment to come, and an everlasting existence in another world? The manner, the time, the place of this existence may be unknown to you, but as to the thing itself you are clear in it; you know that death is but the putting off of a garment, the change of an apartment, the opening of a new scene, the continuation of a varied existence, the mere awakening out of sleep; you have neither fears nor hopes of being hid in the grave for ever; and in this your well-grounded confidence, you go far, very far, beyond the utmost reach of human wisdom.

It

It is worth while to be more particular in this matter; to examine what has in fact been the extent of human reason, with respect to the investigation of life and immortality.

It is readily acknowledged, that an opinion of the immortality of the Soul, and of some sort of a retribution in another world for our good or evil deeds in this, hath generally prevailed in all countries. The Northern nations, from which we ourselves are descended, were accustomed, in their pagan state, to stimulate each other to deeds of prowess in arms, by feigning, that after death they should revel in the palace of their god Odin, and quaff inebriating draughts out of the skulls of the enemies they had slain. The wild inhabitants of America believed "that the Souls of valiant men fled after death beyond the highest mountains, were there gathered to their fathers and grandfathers, and lived in pleasant gardens with great delight; but that the Souls of cowards were

carried to the Evil Being, and lived with him in torments."

Many nations supposed that the next life would be so like this, that we should have, in the region inhabited by Souls, the same wishes and the same wants we have on earth; and in order to supply them it hath been a very prevailing custom, and which is very remarkable, in far distant countries, to bury with the deceased his money, his arms, his wives, and his servants. Not a single people has been discovered by our late navigators round the globe, among whom there did not exist some rude notions of another life. I forbear to speak of the superstitions of Egypt, of India, of Africa and China; for there is no reason to dwell upon the absurd opinions which prevailed in the world concerning a future state, before the Gospel was published, and which still prevail in countries where it has not been received; all that I want to infer from the multiplicity and absurdity of these opinions, is, the probability that the notion

notion of a future state sprung not from the reasonings of mankind, employed either on the nature of the human Soul, or of the Supreme Being, but from some other source; and that the manner of this future existence was modified according to men's passions and imaginations. I will just mention to you three sources, from which the opinion of a life after this may have been derived.

The first is Tradition. There is an event mentioned in Scripture, which may very well be supposed to have made a strong impression upon the men who were then alive, and to have laid a foundation for a tradition concerning some future existence, amongst all nations under heaven. The event I allude to is the translation of Enoch the father of Methuselah. This event happened before the flood, and was undoubtedly well known to Noah, who lived six hundred years with Methuselah, and was himself the great grandson of Enoch. Of the family of Noah has the whole earth been over-

spread; all nations, ancient or modern, learned or unlearned, barbarous or civilized, however at present distinguished from each other by colour, figure, religion, language, situation, all derive their origin either from Shem, or Ham, or Japhet, the three sons of Noah, who survived the deluge: Now it is very natural to suppose that these three men would tell their children, and their children's children, what their father had told them concerning the extraordinary fate of one of their own ancestors, who for his righteous dealing had been translated, probably visibly taken up into heaven, so that he did not see death; and thus a general expectation of a future state, in which men resembling Enoch in piety should be rewarded, might be introduced into the world. The thing itself has been handed down by tradition from the earliest times; and the manner of it, concerning which there is no mention in the story of Enoch, has been infinitely diversified, according to the fancies of different men.

Another

Another source of a general expectation of a future existence, may have been Superstition. When the mind of man is disturbed by hope or fear, or grief or love, or by an excess of any violent passion, his imagination often raises up unto him appearances of things which have no real existence. Even in this more enlightened age there are many who have wrought themselves into a belief of apparitions; and a century ago, the belief of the existence of the spirits of departed men, and of their visible intercourse with mankind, was general among all ranks of people. Murderers were supposed to be haunted by the spectres of those whom they had killed; grief assured the disconsolate mother, that she saw in dreams, or in waking frenzy, the ghost of some favourite child; the warrior encountered in his sleep the apparitions of those whom he had slain in battle; and the desponding lover, whom death had deprived of all his earthly comfort, fondly so far credited his disordered imagination, which presented

to his view the resemblance of his beloved, as to believe that she was still alive in the mansions of the blessed. The imaginations of men have been the same at all periods, and the history of the world shews that all nations have believed in the existence of spectres; and though we justly attribute their supposed appearance to nothing but the workings of a disordered brain, yet, in the infancy of the world, and amongst unenlightened people, they may have been and doubtless were taken for realities; and thus the superstition of a few may have given rise to a general belief that men existed after death.

Civil Policy has been looked upon as another origin of the general belief of a future state. The artifice of Legislators in adding weight to their laws, by threatening their subjects with the punishments of another world, hath been much insisted upon by some writers, and conceived to be the main spring of the general opinion concerning it. Yet it seems to me that this is the least probable source of any

which has been mentioned; not only because a future state has been admitted amongst barbarous nations, who were strangers to all civil polity, but because the belief of it must have been antecedent to this application of it: the governors, as well as the governed, must have had some expectation of another life, before the one would have thought of making, or the other been persuaded to admit it as a sanction of civil institutions.

If, from the general opinion of mankind, for which we have assigned, probably, sufficient foundation, we pass on to the particular reasonings of the most distinguished characters of antiquity, we shall have still less cause to apprehend that the doctrine of a future state sprung from speculation. I do not say that the arguments for another existence after this, which are derived from contemplating analogically the system of Nature, or from the abstract view of the Divine attributes, are any of them without their use, or all of them devoid of weight; yet I question

whether they ever thoroughly convinced any one man, whose faith was not confirmed by better promises. What saith the Preacher, the son of David, the king of Jerusalem, Solomon, the wisest of the sons of men—"that," saith he, "which be-
"falleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts;
"even one thing befalleth them: as the
"one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they
"have all one breath; so that a man hath
"no pre-eminence over a beast: All go unto
"one place; all are of the dust, and all
"turn to dust again." (Eccles. iii. 19, 20.) He proposes a question, indeed, concerning the spirit of a man that goeth upwards, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downwards, but he proposes it in such a manner, as if he thought no one could distinguish the difference. There is a passage or two in his writings, from which some have inferred that he was persuaded of the immortality of the Soul and of a future state of rewards and punishments; but the general turn of his reasoning, both in the book of Proverbs, and in Ecclesiastes,

seems

seems so much to include all our expectations of happiness within the compass of our present existence, that he must at least have had but very obscure conceptions concerning it. And if Solomon himself, with all his wisdom, could not with certainty find out a future state, but was influenced in his expectations by little else than the common tradition of his age and country; what can we expect from other men—from Socrates, for example, or from Cicero? Socrates was a wise and virtuous man; though his wisdom and his virtue have been very improperly exalted, by those who have made a comparison between him and Jesus Christ. We find this celebrated heathen not indeed denying, but expressing his doubts concerning a future state, and wavering in his last moments, with an irresolution and uncertainty as great as could have fallen to the lot of the meanest of his countrymen. "I am now," said he to his friends who stood lamenting his fate, "about to leave this world, and ye are still to continue in it; which

which of our situations is most to be wished, is uncertain to every Being except God." And again, "I would have you to know, that I have great hopes I am now going into the company of good men, yet I would not be too peremptory and confident concerning it; but if death be only a transmigration from hence into another place, and those things which are told us be indeed true, that those who are dead to us do all live there"—and so on. Ye perceive in these, some of his last words, the doubts of Socrates concerning a future state; and he refers to tradition, to those things which had been told him, all his hopes of immortality.—Cicero was as unsettled in his notions concerning a future state, as Socrates appears to have been. There are a great many places in his writings from which this may be collected; I will produce but one. "I know not how," says he, "when I read the arguments in proof of the Soul's immortality, methinks I am fully convinced; and yet after I have laid aside the book, and come

to

to think and consider of the matter alone by myself, presently I find myself fallen again insensibly into my old doubts." There is no need why I should trouble you with the opinions of any more of the heathen philosophers on this subject, since they are all of them much of the same cast: in one part of their writings, you find them speaking with a degree of confidence of another world, in which good men were to be rewarded, and wicked men punished; in another, their confidence is quite gone, and they are full of uncertainty and despair. It seems as if these learned men were very desirous to reason themselves into a belief of what the popular opinion represented as undoubted, and that they were unable to find sufficient proof, and obliged after all their researches to rest satisfied with the faith of the vulgar. Before the preaching of the Gospel, the whole of mankind consisted either of Heathens or Jews; the heathens, it is presumed, were not inferior in the powers of reasoning to ourselves, yet the wisest

wisest amongst them lived and died in such a melancholy uncertainty concerning a future state, as is not to be found amongst the simplest of the Christians. In reading their learned writings, you think you see men groping in the dark; a spark of light indeed occasionally struck, by the excellency of their talents, from the materials around them, illumined for an instant their paths; but though they directed an eager eye towards it, in hopes that it would have conducted them in their way, it scarce lasted till they had seen it; it was soon extinguished, and left them to wander in a dark and dismal labyrinth, from whence nothing but the light of the Gospel could have freed them. Nor were the ancient Jews much more enlightened in this matter than the Heathens. The Law of Moses promises not any other than temporary rewards, it threatens nothing but temporary punishments; for though we should suppose the forty years pilgrimage of the Israelites through the desert, and their taking possession of the land

land of Canaan at the end of them, to have been typical of the pilgrimage of all mankind on the surface of the earth, and of the heaven which we hope to enjoy after death; yet we cannot be certain that the Jews ever understood them in that light. After the age of Solomon, the opinion of a future state became more and more common amongst the Jews, and was pretty generally received by them at the coming of our Saviour; as may appear from the question which they put to him, concerning the woman who had been married to seven husbands—"at the resurrection, whose wife shall she be?"—But even from this question we may see that they had very strange and irrational notions concerning it, which our Saviour by his answer took an opportunity to rectify.

I cannot extend this inquiry to a greater length, by shewing the little hopes which Adam could have entertained of a future existence, from the promise concerning "the seed of the woman bruising the

esteem valuable, is but as a grain of dust in the balance when weighed against it. Happy is that man who is thoroughly penetrated with the opinion of the nothingness of this world, who, with an eye of faith, and hopes full of immortality, is contented to journey on through this little stage of life, without being much attached to it, or much concerned about his accommodations in it; who can "use this world without abusing it, rejoicing in it as if he rejoiced not, and weeping in it as if he wept not."

In order to attain this heavenly frame of mind, we should frequently separate ourselves from the concerns of Humanity, from the pleasures and the profits, and the other pursuits of life; we should enter into our private chamber, and, shutting out every earthly thought, descend into ourselves, and raise in our hearts, by holy meditation on immortality and the joys of Heaven, a fixed resolution to exert our best faculties in the attainment of them; we should be diligent in reading of the Scriptures,

Scriptures, which are now so liberally supplied to us, for in them, and in them alone, are "the words of eternal life;" we should be constant in our attendance on places of public worship, and behave ourselves with great seriousness when there. Thanks be to God, there are great plenty of such places in this our Land; no one need go far to meet with instruction, nor be at much trouble to receive exhortation to holiness of life. It may be that you know your duties as well as the Ministers who are publicly appointed to be your teachers; thank the Giver of all wisdom for your great knowledge; but be not puffed up by it, do not on that account scornfully separate yourselves from the public worship of God, for though you are too wise to need instruction, you are probably not too good to want no amendment of life. Your Minister may perhaps tell you nothing that is new, for truth is homely and old-fashioned; but you ought not to have itching ears, or to expect entertainment

in your Churches; he will put you in mind however of your duty; his admonitions may blow up the dying embers of your devotion, and purge from your hearts the dross of avarice, the filth of sensuality, the abomination of impiety, and every worldly corruption. Finally, my Brethren, let us all, teachers as well as hearers, remember that Christ hath abolished death and placed eternal happiness within our reach: it is a crown of Glory, for which we must fight manfully; it is a jewel of inestimable price, for which we must work diligently. Let us then work as becometh men, who know that their "labour will not be in vain in the Lord."

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE,

IN 1804.

SECOND EDITION.

TO

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH,

PRESIDENT,

AND TO

THE OTHER MEMBERS

OF

THE SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE,

THIS

SERMON,

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SOCIETY,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT,

R. LANDAFF.

SERMON VII.

GAL. vi. 9.

LET US NOT BE WEARY IN WELL-DOING.

GREAT Cities have been properly called the graves of Mankind: and they may with equal propriety be called the sepulchres of Virtue; the nurseries of Vice; the hot-beds of Corruption, physical, political, and moral.

An incessant contention for mastery subsists in every Civil State, and especially in every overgrown Metropolis, between the Laws on the one hand, and the Manners of the people on the other. This warfare commences with the very commencement of Government, and it ends

only with it's dissolution. It is carried on, during the existence of the State, with variable success, according to the varying talents of the Governors exerted in the enactment of laws more or less salutary, and the varying dispositions of the People to resist or to submit to the laws enacted; and it is not finally extinguished, till the general prevalence of profligate Morals puts an end to the Government itself.

There is no instance in sacred or profane History, of a rich, luxurious, immoral State ever reforming itself; it proceeds from bad to worse, till, in the course of God's providence, it's fall is accomplished by the sword, by famine, or by pestilence. Notwithstanding this, the fall of every State may certainly be retarded by whatever retards the progress of Vice.—Together with other means of retarding this progress amongst ourselves, there are Two which appear to be eminently useful,—The religious instruction of the People,—and the due execution of laws, adapted

to the circumstances of the times; neither so strict as to render the execution of them impracticable, nor so lax as to encourage the growth of any species of Immorality. The religious instruction of the People contributes to prevent the very existence of Vice—and a discreet execution of the laws curbs it's progress where it does exist.

We read of a Country in which the Education of the people was, from infancy, committed to the State. The children of individuals were considered as the children of the community: and so much was the safety of the State supposed to be connected with the institution of it's citizens, that when *Antipater* demanded of the *Spartans* an hundred and fifty children to be delivered up to him as hostages, they offered to send him twice the number of grown-up men.

In our own and in all other European States, the domestic education of children has been preferred to that which the State could give them. But though the

Legislature has conceded to the affection of parents the right of educating their offspring, and confided to parental care the performance of that duty, yet it neither has been or ought to have been inattentive to the moral and religious instruction of all the members of the community over which it presides. It would be an inequitable and barbarous policy in any civil Government, to punish the Vices of it's Subjects, if it had taken no pains to instruct them in Virtue. The office of the Civil Magistrate extends not merely to the punishment, but primarily and principally to the prevention of crimes. Now crimes are best prevented, and the foundations of good government are most securely laid, when piety towards God, a reverence for the laws, and a regard for virtue, are instilled, by proper authority, into the minds of the People.

Piety towards God is here mentioned as an essential part of education. Unhappily for the Land, every other part of Education is scrupulously attended to,

to, whilst this is sadly neglected, through the inadvertence of Parents, or the incapacity of Teachers. A strong sense of Religion is so essential to the well-being of human society, that it is wonderful to me how it could ever have been made a question, whether any State could subsist without it. Theft, Adultery, Murder, Perjury, Fraud, and other crimes, are punished in all Countries, and with great severity in many; yet the perpetrators of these crimes every where hope to escape detection, and thereby to avoid the punishment denounced against them. —Had their minds been imbued with proper principles of Piety, they would have known it to be impossible for them to escape the detection of God, or the punishment to be inflicted by Him. The fear of God not only regulates our conduct in many points to which human laws cannot extend their cognizance, but it gives a great additional sanction to the laws themselves.

This fear of the Almighty may be blended

blended with Superstition. I speak not of such a fear; though it may be doubted whether even such a fear be not preferable to no fear at all; but I speak of that fear which is limited by the sober dictates of Natural Religion, or more efficaciously and circumstantially by the doctrines of genuine Christianity. Men bewildered in the mazes of metaphysical philosophy, instigated by the affectation of superior penetration, terrified by the intolerance of fanatical zeal, disgusted by the numberless false religions which have enslaved the human mind in every country of the world—Men of this stamp may rashly conclude that no revealed Religion can be true, and that all the ends of civil Government may be attained without the assistance of any. The experiment whether a State can subsist without Religion will not, I hope, be any where deliberately tried:—if it should, I have no hesitation in foretelling, that the black picture of idolatrous vice which St. Paul has exhibited in his Epistles, will be infinitely

infinitely outdone by that of Atheistic Depravity.

But, whatever may be the practice of other States, we have no apprehension of Religion being neglected in our own. Free Schools, from the time of *Alfred*, have been founded in many parts of the Land, and places for the worship of God, and the religious instruction of the people, have been erected in all; an Order of Men is maintained at the public expence, whose office it is to explain the obligations of natural and revealed Religion to persons of all ages, and to enforce upon the minds of all, the necessity and utility of Sobriety, Probity, and Godliness.

In saying that places for public worship have been erected in all parts of the Land, I would not be understood to say that they are sufficiently numerous in large Towns, or in this Metropolis. Near a Million of Inhabitants are here congregated, on an area of a few square miles; and additional Churches are certainly wanted

wanted for this immense population. The Legislature, no doubt, duly estimating the importance of affording religious instruction to the People, will ere long take this matter into consideration: and when it does, three things I hope will be attended to;—that the Churches be built upon a simple and capacious plan;—that the seats remain unappropriated, so that the common People, as well as their Superiors, may be well accommodated in the House of God;—and that the salaries be sufficiently liberal to engage the service of Preachers of the first ability.

This public teaching, when aided, as it often is and always ought to be, by private monition, friendly expostulation, and the seasonable advice of pious and exemplary Pastors, is of great use in restraining Vice;—that it is not of much greater, is not the fault of the State, but of the individuals which compose it. Let but the most ignorant person in the kingdom be constant in his attendance at

at Church, and it will be quite impossible for him to remain ignorant of his duty. Thou shalt do no Murder; Thou shalt not commit Adultery; Thou shalt not Steal; Thou shalt not bear false Witness; —these are prohibitions perfectly intelligible to the meanest capacity: no one who hears them read, can plead his ignorance as an excuse for his immorality; no one who hears read the divine instructions expressed in every page of the Gospel, but must know it to be his duty to purify his heart from all carnal affections, and to adorn it with piety toward God, and good-will to mankind.

A civil Magistrate may think that he has done as much as ought to be expected from him, when he has made such an ample provision for the moral instruction of the persons over whom his care extends, and that the sword of inexorable Justice ought to be unsheathed against all those who by their crimes disturb the tranquillity of this Government, either through voluntary ignorance of their duty, or from

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to say that any accountable Being, any Being endued with understanding and liberty, is incapable of reformation;—it is a coarse, illiberal, cruel, indolent mode of civil legislation, to suffer diseased members to become gangrenous and corrupt, rather than be at the trouble and expence of healing them. It should be the policy of every wise State to govern men by the fear of Infamy, rather than by the fear of Death; for death robs the community of a citizen, whilst the fear of infamy is the parent of virtuous endeavour to recover lost reputation. This fear is annihilated, and an audacity in vice is introduced in it's stead, when many individuals are compelled to herd together, and to become associates in wickedness. It cannot however, it may be urged, be expected—that the Legislature should waste the public treasure in maintaining Rogues and Prostitutes.—Nothing of this kind is either expected or required;—the intention is not to maintain flagitious persons, but to lessen the number

number of them, by freeing them from the necessity they are under of persevering in an abandoned conduct, by affording the means of becoming virtuous to all those who shall become weary of being vicious. A tenth part of that treasure which is annually expended, by the different States of Christendom, in unchristian warfare, would supply for ever the expence of Establishments in every country, in which the morals of thousands would be amended, their idleness changed into industry, their profligacy into sobriety, their lives preserved for the public good, and the peace of society maintained.

I have said as much on the first means of preventing Vice as the time will allow me to say: and, in speaking of the second, —the due execution of the Laws—I mean not so much to blame those to whom this execution is officially committed, for any neglect of duty, as to beseech You, who have voluntarily associated for this purpose, "not to be weary in well-doing,"—not to be deterred from your design, by

the various discouragements which may be thrown in your way.

This Society will be spoken against by those whom it actually brings, or who are in hourly apprehension of being brought by it, to shame and punishment. These, unhappily, constitute a numerous band, which, being hardened in impiety, will be loud in calumny: but their abuse is your praise.

It will be spoken against by those whom it deprives of sensual gratifications in gin-shops and brothels—by those who delight in the prurient pleasures of an heated imagination.—What then? In lessening the fuel of the passions, you pluck a fagot from the fire of hell; in withdrawing from the eye of Youth every incentive to unchaste desire, you keep the mind pure and the body unpolluted; you prepare an holy temple, in which the Spirit of God may not disdain to dwell for ever.

It will be spoken against by those who think it sufficient for every man to take care

care of his own salvation, deeming it impertinence, if not persecution, to attempt interfering with the morals, though to the amending of the lives, of other men.—"Ye, brethren, have not so learned Christ;" every approach towards persecution is, I am confident, and always will be, far from you; but you rightly conceive it to be your duty, as servants of Him who "went about doing good," to promote, as far as you are able, the spiritual good of your fellow Christians.

I have heard it objected to this and a similar Society, that the Individuals composing them affect puritanical principles, and are swollen with the pharisaical pride of being thought more righteous than their neighbours. What! is the world then at length so much at enmity with God, that the "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" is become a matter of reproach?—are we so rapidly ripening to destruction, that to be zealous in winning men from the dominion of their Lusts and the snares of the Devil, is to be

interpreted into pride of heart and hypocrisy of conduct?

I have heard it objected to these Societies, that the Individuals composing them put on the character of Informers. No! the character of an informer is to injure others for his own benefit. But what is the injury done to those who are reclaimed from Vice by the discipline of the humane laws of the land? what is the benefit derived to any individual, abstracted from the delightful consciousness of discharging a Christian duty? The benefit, abstracted from this consciousness, is expence, trouble, anxiety, obloquy, the contempt of the worldly-wise, the neglect of the unthinking, the odium of the profligate, the scoff of those who "make a mock at sin."

Moralists teach us to refer our actions to three rules, in order to judge of their rectitude or obliquity. The first is the divine Law,—that which God has set to the actions of men, whether promulgated by the light of Nature or the voice of Revelation:

Revelation :—the second is the civil Law, —the rule set by the Commonwealth to the actions of those who belong to it:— the third is the Law of Opinion or Reputation. Whilst you are certain that the Association which you have formed is consonant to the Law of God, inasmuch as it's direct tendency is the destruction of Sin; whilst you are certain that the Association which you have formed is consonant to the Law of the land, inasmuch as it is wholly occupied in enforcing it's injunctions; you need not be solicitous about the opinion of the world, if that should chance to be against you. "Marvel not, my Brethren, if the world hate you." Ye know that it hated Christ and his Apostles before it hated you. "If ye "were of the world," said Christ to his Apostles, and the words may be applied to you, "the world would love it's own; "but because ye are not of the world, "therefore the world hateth you."

When I speak of the probability of the world hating you, I speak of the very

worst part of the world; of those who in Scripture are thus described,—"the "despisers of those that do good, heady, "high-minded men, lovers of pleasure "more than lovers of God, having a form "of godliness, but denying the power "thereof:"—from such, it is the Apostle's advice, "from such turn away." The virtuous, the religious, the serious part of the world,—those whose "affections are "not vile, whose conversation is in "Heaven," whose faith is operative, who are not nominal, but real Christians,—all these will think of you with respect, will speak of you with approbation; and many of them will probably co-operate with you in the noble design of suppressing Vice.—I call it a noble design, and I think it so both in a religious and in a political point of view: for, in a religious view, what design can be more noble than that of saving the souls of men by a reformation of their manners? and in a political view, what truth can be more certain, than that he who lessens the

Vice

Vice of his Country does more for it's prosperity than he who augments it's Wealth?—To lessen the Vice of a Nation, is to procure for it the protection of Heaven; whilst to augment it's Wealth, is, ordinarily speaking, to augment it's Wickedness.—Now the stability of the material World is not more dependent on the uniform energy of the laws of motion, than the stability of States is on their constant observance of the laws of morality.

Deplorable, without doubt, is the condition of that Country, in which the manners of it's People have gotten the ascendency over it's laws, in which the fashion of the world tyrannizes over the Religion of Christ! And is there not great reason to believe that such is the condition of this Country, at this time, in both these points? The law says that deliberate Duelling is murder;—our manners say that it is not. The law prohibits Gaming, at any time, for high stakes;—our manners permit it, even on

a Sunday, to any extent. The law suffers not the Sabbath to be profaned by the unnecessary pursuits of ordinary occupations; — our manners, stimulated by commercial avarice, suffer Mail-coaches, Stage-coaches, and other means of conveying goods and passengers, to be as free on that as on any other day of the week.

Religion bids us perform unto the Lord our Oaths;—fashion has rendered oaths of office a by-word. Intemperance of every kind may be avoided, from the apprehension of disease; — but Intemperance is fashionable. Who abstains from "chambering, rioting, and wantonness," from an apprehension of being thereby excluded from the kingdom of Christ? Religion represents illicit commerce with the Sex as a great sin;—fashion esteems it no sin at all, and has rendered it as common amongst Christians as it ever was amongst the Heathens of Greece or Rome. Religion bids Women "adorn themselves in modest apparel, "with shamefacedness and sobriety;"—

fashion

fashion exhibits them in such indecency of apparel, that the pure innocency of a virgin mind shudders to appear in it.

I have no pleasure in representing us in a worse light than we deserve; but our assembling here on this occasion is of itself a convincing proof that the Laws have not sufficient energy to restrain the dissoluteness of our morals. The laws are good: but they are eluded by the lower classes, and set at nought by the higher. The laws are good: but they are fallen into contempt, and require the zeal, the activity, the discretion of such a Society as this to renovate their vigour.

Their vigour, however, never can be fully renovated till the rich and powerful shall be compelled by penalties, or, which is more to be wished, shall be induced by reason and their own sense of decorum and public duty, to set an example of obeying them. Man is an imitative animal, going not where he ought to go, but where others have gone before. I should be ashamed to recommend

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from this place the Suppression of Vice amongst some, if I did not recommend it's suppression amongst all; being sensible that the good example of their superiors would be of more efficacy in suppressing the Vices of the lower orders, than the very best execution of the very best laws ever can be.—And if ever all ranks of Society ought to concur in adopting such a Christian purity of manners as may avert from us the displeasure of God, this is the time; now it is that the rod of God's wrath is upreared to chastise not only us, but all Christendom, for it's Impiety, Infidelity, and Immorality. I hope and believe that the morals of Christians are in every country superior to those of Mahometans and Pagans; yet he who will seriously compare the morals of the bulk of Christians with the precepts of their Religion, cannot but fear that to all Christendom the day of calamity is at hand.

It would be a waste of time to point out to your attention any particular Vices

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to be suppressed; they are better known to you than to me;—or to recommend moderation united with firmness in the pursuit of your purpose. You yourselves are perfectly aware, that to be righteous over-much, and to be righteous over-little, are extremes equally distant from that golden mediocrity, which, in all human transactions, public and private, is the best principle of conduct, and which is recommended to us by the example of our Saviour himself, who occasionally mixed in convivial intercourse with Publicans and Sinners, and taught the hypocritical Pharisee that "The sabbath was made "for man, not man for the sabbath."

The Suppression of Vice, though it may through your perseverance, when assisted by others who shall concur with you, be very extensive; yet is it not the only good which will be derived from your Association. The very circumstance of near a thousand persons becoming, "in the midst of a crooked and perverse "generation, shining Lights," to conduct men

men besotted in their sins, men enslaved by their passions, men brutalized by sensuality, men entangled in the thorns and briers of worldly pursuits, alienated from God, and strangers to the blessed hope of Redemption through Jesus Christ, —to conduct such unhappy, comfortless, benighted travellers into the narrow path which leads to Heaven; this is of itself a proof that Religion has not yet left the land: it is a godly disposition of a few to do good to many; it is a little leaven which may in time leaven the whole lump, and render us a people "zealous of good works," a people animated with a stedfast hope of immortal life, and strenuous in our endeavours to acquire that purity of heart, that holiness of principle, without which immortal life must of necessity be a life of misery.

This is a very serious consideration, and requires a short illustration. In the innumerable gradations of sensitive Beings with which Almighty God (blessed for ever be his name!) hath replenished this Earth,

Earth, and hath, we infer from analogy, replenished all other Planets in this Solar System, and all other Solar Systems sunk in the inconceivable profundity of infinite space, we may conclude that the human species is neither the highest nor the lowest in the scale of intellectual and moral agents.—This conclusion, Reason renders probable as to both it's points, and Revelation renders certain as to one of them, for by it we are assured that the human is lower than the angelic Nature; and we are farther assured that now an opportunity is given us of ascending in the chain of existence, of becoming, like the Angels of God, immortal. What diligence do men use to obtain rank or riches, with what eagerness do they follow the bubbles of ambition, with what sedulity do they labour to become learned, with what fondness do they court distinction among the higher circles of life!—Alas! what is the din and tumult and distinction of the world, when compared with the advancing a single step in

in the gradations of Being? The steps indeed are infinite; we cannot even in Eternity find time to ascend them all; the highest will still be at an infinite distance from the throne of God: but in every ascending step, we shall put off more and more the natural and moral infirmity of our human Nature, participate more and more in the felicity prepared for those who obey the will of the great Creator, the universal Father of Nature. This will is not a mutable will, varying, like human will, with the variableness of time, place, and circumstance;—it is not an arbitrary will, capriciously withholding blessings from any of his creatures;—it is not an interested will, aiming at nothing but it's own gratification;—O, no! God wants not the obedience of any of his creatures to increase his happiness;—it is a will to guide and encourage all human kind in the road to Heaven;—it is a will to work in a weak and mortal Being that piety, holiness, and benignity, without which Omnipotence itself cannot elevate

us in the scale of existence.—If it be, as it appears to be, a fixed law of Nature, that a certain degree of moral perfection is necessary to capacitate us for the fruition of a certain degree of felicity, it will follow, that God himself cannot make an habitual and impenitent Sinner happy;—we must, as our Saviour told Nicodemus, "be born again;" our moral propensities must be changed from Vice to Virtue, before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

To You, the first promoters of this Institution, any advice of mine would be useless; your minds must have been rightly disposed, or you would never have bestowed your time and attention in so arduous a work. Ye deserve the thanks of your Country, but ye seek not the praise of men.—To others who shall be inclined to assist in carrying on what you have so nobly begun, I will address but one word;—Think, I beseech you, in what a work you will be engaged. By annually parting with a very little of that which may daily

daily be well spared from your luxury, lopped off from your vanity, or torn away from your avarice, you will co-operate with the great Author of Nature in cutting off the occasions of sin, and in thereby putting an end to misery; for Misery is the offspring of Sin, and Sin is the support of Misery.

I have wearied too long your patience; yet I cannot conclude without entreating you to suffer from me a word not immediately respecting the purpose of our meeting, but a word of general exhortation; I shall never have another opportunity of giving it to you, in this place, or in any place.

The description which Solomon made of the vanity of all human pursuits in his time, is applicable to all times; and there is little difference to be found in the nature of the pursuits themselves. Power, Wealth, Honour, Fame, Pleasure, ever have been, and, whilst human nature remains unchanged, ever will be, objects of human attention; and, if they are pursued

pursued with moderation, attained by honourable means, and considered not as final ends of our labour, but as temporary, subordinate instruments of human felicity, I do not see how they can be said to be Vanities, unless on this ground—that they all soon come to an end. In this respect, Life itself may be considered as the greatest of all Vanities; so great indeed, that the wise King said, he hated life;—"Yea, "I hated all my labour, which I had "taken under the sun: because I should "leave it unto the man that shall be "after me."

In what a different point of view has Christianity taught us to consider Life! Instead of being a Vanity, it is an object of the greatest possible importance. It is a shadow, no doubt, which hourly fleeth away: yet are we lost, if we do not lay hold on this shadow. It is not even a moment of Eternity; yet, on the use we make of this moment of Time depends the quality of our everlasting existence. This life is the School in which we are to be

instructed for Heaven;—in this School, we must learn lessons of piety, of brotherly love, of purity and self-government;—in this School, we must make ready the Wedding-garment, be clothed with the Robe of Righteousness, be adorned with that Christian disposition, without which the Blood of Christ will have flowed in vain,—without which it will be naturally impossible for us to become partakers of the blessings of Heaven.

The life of Philosophers, it has been said, is spent in the contemplation of death;—the life of Christians ought to be spent in the contemplation of everlasting existence. Gracious God! how terrible to bad men, how pleasurable to good men, how interesting to all men, is the thought of Everlasting Existence! It is a thought, which, if rooted firmly by faith in the hearts of individuals, if expanded therein by contemplation, if cherished therein by repeated reflection, would of itself reform the morals of Mankind. Everlasting Existence!! Ambitious tyrants of the earth,

earth, relentless murderers of mankind, barbarous promoters of rapine, desolation, and bloodshed, think of this!

Boasters against God, mockers in the latter times, arrogant, ignorant, impious, ridiculers of the Religion of Christ, think of this!

Gay, sensual, dissipated conformists to the foolish fashions of a wicked world, think of this!

Perhaps you do not believe in this Everlasting Existence; perhaps you have so puzzled your reason with dark argumentation for and against the natural immortality of the human Soul, for and against the possibility or the credibility of Miracles, that you are distracted by scepticism, and beginning to lean to the annihilating doctrines of *Epicurus*,—to the opinion, that as the beast dieth, so dieth man.—O, let not a propensity to Vice blind your understanding,—trust not speculations, which, in removing the hopes and fears of futurity, will give the reins to your passions: for, passions indulged without

restraint must, of natural consequence, shut against you the gates of Heaven. Read the Gospel; it will tell you the danger of passions uncontrolled — Read the Gospel; and you will find that anchor of a Christian's hope, the fact of the Resurrection of Christ, and consequently the certainty of your own, established by testimony as indisputable as any fact in ancient History — Read the Gospel; believe the Gospel; obey the Gospel: for in it are the words of everlasting Life; in it, and in it alone, can sinful Man (and what man sinneth not?) find rest unto his Soul. I conclude, in the language of St. Paul to Timothy; "Consider what I "say; and the Lord give you understand-"ing in all things!"

SERMON

PREACHED

IN THE CHAPEL OF THE LONDON HOSPITAL,

APRIL 8, 1802.

SECOND EDITION.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

WILLIAM HENRY DUKE OF GLOUCESTER,

PRESIDENT,

AND

THE GOVERNORS,

OF THE LONDON HOSPITAL,

THE FOLLOWING

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THEM,

AND

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

R. LANDAFF.

SERMON VIII.

GAL. i. 7.

THERE BE SOME THAT TROUBLE YOU, AND WOULD PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

INSTITUTIONS, such as we are this day met to support, had no existence in the heathen world; they are the noble fruits of the Christian religion, impelling the hearts of individuals, not to schemes of avarice or ambition, much less to deeds of rapine and desolation, but to works of piety, sympathy, and philanthropy: they owe their establishment and flourishing condition to the belief of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and they will owe their decay and ruin to the disbelief of it. Can I then employ our present time more suitably to the occasion of our present

meeting, than by endeavouring to guard every one who hears me, from that "evil heart of unbelief," which has of late years made a pestilent progress through many parts of the Continent, and which is now extending it's malignant influence through all ranks amongst ourselves?

From the age of the Apostles to the present time, men have differed from each other, not only in modes of divine worship, but in the interpretation of Scripture, and have deduced, from the same sacred books, opposite articles of faith; yet, till lately, they all (with very few exceptions) agreed, that the Bible contained a revelation of the will of God. But in our days, not only men of learning dispute, as heretofore, concerning the meaning of particular texts of Scripture, but the lowest classes of the community have been instructed to question the truth of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and to propose their objections against all religion, natural and revealed, with very unbecoming assurance. No one need be surprised at hearing that objections have been made to the

the truth of all religion. The works of creation, of providence, of redemption; the natural and moral attributes of God; nay, even the nature of man, as an accountable Being; can never be so thoroughly comprehended by the most learned of mankind, nor so clearly explained to others, as to preclude the most unlearned from raising atheistical objections. The truth of the Jewish dispensation depends on the divine mission of Moses; the truth of the Christian dispensation depends on the divine mission of Jesus. Concerning these missions, we can know nothing but from history; now every one, who has at all considered the subject, must be aware that such objections may be proposed, even by well-intentioned, and especially by ill-intentioned and illiterate men, against some of the many circumstances usually detailed in every history, as none but the most learned can fully answer.

The difficulty attending the history of transactions long since passed, is much increased, when these transactions are such as we have had no experience of.

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We have never seen a man walking forth from the chambers of the dead, in consequence of another person's having said to him, *Come forth!* We have never seen a boisterous sea becoming calm, in consequence of a man's saying to the winds and the waves, *Peace, be still!* We have never seen angels in human shape, familiarly conversing with humankind, nor heard articulate sounds issuing from the clouds of heaven!—What, then, must we, on account of this our inexperience, reject, as fabulous, the history of these transactions which we meet with in the Bible? No; let no man's ridicule persuade you to this; hold fast your belief of these things: they have not happened, we confess, in our age or country; but that is a very insufficient reason for maintaining, that they never did happen in any other age or country. These things are recorded in a book, part of which is the oldest book in the world, and all of which has greater marks of credibility belonging to it, than any other book which was ever published to mankind.

This is not merely my opinion of the Bible, it was the opinion of a man as much surpassing me in understanding, as I may be supposed to surpass the most unlettered person in this assembly: it was the opinion of that man, who has been properly said to have surpassed in genius all humankind—of *Newton*. There are few of you, I presume, who have not heard of Newton, and none of you, I fear, who have not heard of *Paine*, and of others, who have attempted to destroy the credit of that book, which Newton so highly valued; I think myself justified in saying, that a thousand such men are, in understanding, but as the dust of the balance, when weighed against Newton.

These men will tell you, that Jesus was an impostor, and that he never rose from the dead. This is a point of the last importance, for, *if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.* But that Christ did rise from the dead, there is a short proof; short, indeed, but clear and convincing, and level to every capacity. Ask the first Christian you

you meet, why he keeps Sunday, the first day of the week, holy, rather than Saturday, the Jewish sabbath, or than any other day? He will tell you, that Sunday is the Lord's Day—not the day on which the Lord God Almighty rested from the work of creation, but the day on which the Lord Jesus Christ *was proved to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.* Ask him, why he believes that Jesus rose from the dead on that day? he will tell you, that he believes it, because all Christians in all ages have believed it, and have all done as he does, set apart that day for divine worship, as a memorial of that singular event. Those who saw, and conversed, and eat and drank with Jesus after his resurrection, instituted this rite, and all Christians have adhered to it on their authority. Now, does it not appear to every one of you, that the uniform celebration, by millions of Christians, in all ages and countries, of a singular rite instituted in commemoration of a singular event, is a much stronger proof that the event did in fact take place, than the

the bare assertion of a few men, in a distant country, and near eighteen hundred years afterwards, can be of the contrary? This reasoning may be illustrated by a familiar instance. The discovery of the Gunpowder Plot has been annually celebrated by public rejoicing, on the fifth of November, ever since that discovery was made: it is not yet two hundred years since that event; but if it should continue to be celebrated for sixteen hundred years to come, our posterity, I think, would listen with scorn to any man who should then have the impudence to tell them, that they and all their ancestors had been imposed on, for that there never had been such a plot. Sunday is not an annual, but a weekly day of rejoicing, for the resurrection of Jesus having taken place on that day; why should not we listen with scorn to those who say to us, You and all Christians, in all ages, in all countries, have been imposed on, for Jesus Christ never rose from the dead? You cannot fail to understand this argument for the truth of the Christian religion, for

nothing

nothing can be more certain, than that God would not have raised an impostor from the dead: he did raise Jesus from the dead, therefore Jesus was no impostor.

These men will tell you that Moses was an impostor, who pretended to work miracles, and to the having an intercourse with God, which, from some apparent difficulties in the history respecting him, they are sure he had not. It is now near three thousand three hundred years since Moses, according to the Bible, brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Ask the first Jew you meet, whether Moses did or did not work miracles in Egypt? he will tell you that Moses did undoubtedly, by the command and power of God, work all the miracles attributed to him. Ask the same question of the Jews in Holland, Germany, Spain, Italy, in every part of the habitable world; and they will all give you the same answer. Ask these Jews, whether this their account of Moses is an ancient account, admitted by their whole nation, or a story lately invented and believed only by a few? they will tell you,

you, that from the days of Moses to the present hour, there never was a time when it was not believed by their whole nation, by their elders, their generals, their judges, their kings, by all their great and learned men, as well as by the common people. Now, I submit to your own judgment (for the matter thus plainly stated may be judged of by every one) whether you will believe a numerous nation, testifying through a succession of ages, for above three thousand years, certain events to have taken place in the time of their forefathers, who had been eye-witnesses of them, as recorded in your Bible; or you will believe a few men, now boldly asserting, but in no manner whatever proving, or rendering probable, the contrary. Read the seventy-eighth Psalm, it is a kind of an abridgment of the Jewish history from the time of Jacob to that of David, and you will there find mention made of the miracles which God wrought in Egypt by the hand of Moses; you will there learn also, the means by which the memory of these events has been faithfully preserved

preserved from one age to another. Fathers, in every generation, taught their children the wonderful works that God had done in the sight of their forefathers in the land of Egypt; and they taught them these things, that their posterity might know them, and the children which were yet unborn, to the intent that when they came up they might shew their children the same. Now, fathers are not accustomed to tell lies to their children. An individual father may be deceived as to a fact related to him by another, and he may, in consequence of such a deception, tell unknowingly an untruth to his son; but it is impossible to admit that many thousands of fathers could at one and the same time be deceived, with respect to facts of which they were eye-witnesses. The ancestors of the present Jews saw the Red Sea divided, and the waters standing on an heap; they saw the rock smitten, and waters gushing out like rivers; they saw, for forty years together, manna rained down from heaven; and they and their descendants kept, for many

years

years after the death of Moses, a pot filled with that kind of bread, as a memorial of the fact: they saw the mighty works which had been done in Egypt; they testified to their children, not what had been related to them by others, but what they themselves had seen, and they enjoined their children to transmit their testimony through all generations. Their testimony has been transmitted even to our time, for the Jews now living in every quarter of the globe, all say as their fathers said in the days of David, *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what thou hast done in their time of old.*

These men will tell you (I tremble whilst I mention their blasphemy) that—there is no God. Ask all the rest of mankind what they think on that point? The many millions now existing on the surface of the earth will all answer, as the many millions who are now no more would in their respective ages have all answered—*Doubtless there is a God.* Ask them why they believe that there is a God? They will answer, Our fathers who begat us

told us that there is a God; they received the information from their fathers, who had been themselves instructed in this first of all truths by their progenitors: So that if the existence of a God be, as these men represent it, a fable, an invention of priests and politicians, it is a fable as old as the Creation itself, an invention found out before there were either priests or politicians among mankind. The tradition concerning a Creator of the world reaches up to the very time of the creation; and as it is one of the most wonderful truths that can be understood by the human race, it has been more generally received than any other. All the learned nations of antiquity acknowledged a God, and all the barbarous nations of modern times agree in the same belief: Now universal tradition concerning a matter of fact, is justly to be esteemed the most substantial argument for the truth of that fact. There was a time when our first parents were the only earthly witnesses of the creation; they found themselves alive on the surface of this globe, together with a variety of

other

other animals—they were certain that they had not created themselves; and as to the other animals which they saw around them, they would readily conclude that a lion, a fish, or a bird, was not capable of making itself, much less of making such a creature as man. This their reason would soon have pointed out to them; but their Creator did not leave them to the deductions of their reason respecting the cause of their existence; he told them who it was that had fashioned them, and of what materials they were made; that it was He, their Creator, who had formed them of the dust of the earth, and breathed into them the breath of life. Now does it not seem probable that Adam would inform his children and his children's children of this event, and that they would bring their descendants, through all generations, acquainted with so important a truth as the existence of God, proved by the creation of man? This might have been expected, and this has in fact happened; for all the different nations which have formerly existed, or are

now subsisting on the earth, of whatever colour, shape, size they may be, whatever language they may speak, whether learned or unlearned, barbarous or civilized, all agree in believing that there is a God, the Creator and Conservator of all things. Some travellers, indeed, have mentioned a nation or two so sunk in barbarism, as to have retained no tradition concerning the creation of the world, no notion of a God; but there is reason to suspect the truth of their information, from their not being sufficiently acquainted with the manners, customs, and language of the barbarians. Every part of the Universe, from the great Globes which incessantly perform their undeviating revolutions in the heavens, to the grass and the stones on which we tread, is formed with such exquisite design, so perfectly adapted to a beneficent end, so evidently impressed with marks of power, wisdom, and goodness, that he who, despising tradition, would from reason argue against the existence of a God, may be compared to a man, who, blinded by excess of light,

disputes

disputes against the existence and splendour of the sun.

I have now produced to you the testimony of all *Christians* to the resurrection of Jesus, as a reason why you should believe the Christian religion to be true—the testimony of all *Jews* to the veracity of Moses, as a reason why you should believe the Jewish dispensation to be from God—and the testimony of all mankind to the fact of the creation, as a reason why you should believe in the existence of a Supreme Being; thinking that this kind of reasoning is best suited to general apprehension, and believing that no one, however enlarged, however limited his capacity may be, can duly consider it, without feeling indignation at the attempts of those, who are labouring, by wretched cavils and indecent ridicule, to shake our faith in the Bible, *to pervert the Gospel of Christ*, and thereby to make us, instead of Christians, something worse than Pagans.

But that you may not be induced, by the perusal of profane books, or the con-

versation of profane men, to annex more importance than they deserve to the objections which you may have heard, or may in future hear, made to your religion, suffer me to open to your view the two main sources, from which the great infidelity of the age is derived; they appear to me to be—the viciousness of men's lives—and their inattention to religious inquiries.

Every one must have observed, that men are inclined to think ill and to speak ill of their enemies; to listen to every tale, true or false, which tends to the degradation of the character of those whom they dislike, and to rejoice in every event which frees them from the fear of suffering by their resentment. What happens to most men in the ordinary concerns of life, happens to all bad men in the concerns of religion. They look upon the Gospel as their greatest enemy, it poisons their pleasures, it disturbs them in the fruition of their sins, it awakens their conscience, and they would be heartily glad to be freed from the punishment with which it threatens them; hence they listen

listen with pleasure to the arguments which are brought against it, and they attend not at all to the answering of objections, or the removal of difficulties. He who in a court of justice has borne false witness against his neighbour, and by perjury deprived him of property, character, liberty, or life, cannot but be wonderfully attentive to an Atheist endeavouring to prove that there is no God. Thou shalt do no murder; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Moses has told us that these are the words of God himself. You cannot but think that murderers, adulterers, and thieves must hear, with wonderful satisfaction, an audacious calumniator representing Moses as an impostor; and as men readily believe what they ardently desire, every little difficulty occurring in the first five books of the Bible will be to them a convincing argument that Moses was not the author of these books, or that, if he were, he pretended to an intercourse with God which he was not favoured with. He who in sensuality has surpassed

the beasts that perish, cannot but be delighted with the sophistry of those, who assure him that the acquisition of habits of Christian purity, temperance, and charity, is an useless labour, for that he will perish as the brutes do. Thus our bad morals blind our better judgments, and give us a bias against the truth; they teach us to magnify trifling objections into unanswerable arguments against Revelation. As soon as men begin to lead unchristian lives, they begin to doubt concerning Christian doctrines; this doubting continues, and increases, with the continuance and increase of their vicious courses: vice generates doubt, and doubt supports and augments vice, till men become in their hearts confirmed infidels, because they have become in their lives confirmed sinners. Whenever then we hear a man questioning the truth of religion, before we pay any attention to his argumentation, let us ask ourselves this question, Would it not be for this man's interest that Christianity should be false? The answer to that question will, in general,

general, instruct us in what light we should consider his objections.

The inattention of men to religious inquiries is another source of infidelity, not so powerful, perhaps, as viciousness of life, nor followed by such pernicious consequences, yet very abundant and dangerous. The religious education of young persons is, in many families, entirely neglected, and in those which pay some attention to it, is seldom carried far enough; parents and tutors contenting themselves with teaching the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion, without entering into the proof of it's being a revelation of the will of God. This proceeding is not improper, for the minds of children, though unequal to the apprehension of abstract reasoning, are very susceptible of moral impressions, good or bad; they are soft as wax, and may be moulded as we think fit. But it is a great misfortune, that when young persons are grown up, and become capable of understanding the grounds on which the Christian religion is founded, their instruction

is rarely attended to by others, or by themselves.

The desire of rising in professions, of getting forward in business, of acquiring distinction in society, of providing for families, so occupy the generality of men, when arrived at mature age, that they have little leisure and less inclination to apply their time and talents to religious investigation. If to these causes of their neglect, we add the supposed difficulty of the undertaking, the aversion which most persons have from mental exertion of any kind, and especially in the perusal of serious books—the allurements of pleasure, and, above all, the licentious maxims of an adulterous generation—the pestilent example of a rich, luxuriant, dissipated Capital—we may without difficulty account for men's negligence in this, the most important of all concerns; for what concern can be so important as an ascertainment of the truth of the Christian religion? Whenever then we hear men of eminence in the world, such as persons of rank, officers in the army or navy,

lawyers, physicians, principal merchants or manufacturers, ridiculing holy things, insinuating their doubts, or professing their disbelief of Christianity, before we suffer their conversation to affect us in the manner which, from the respectability of their situation, it will be apt to do, let us ask ourselves this question; Is it probable that these men have ever made a proper inquiry into the truth of the Christian religion?—If we have cause to think that they have not made this inquiry, we shall reasonably conclude, that Christianity may be true, notwithstanding their ridicule or disbelief of it. For they, who being ignorant of the proofs by which facts (such as respect the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus) may be established, profess to disbelieve them, may more properly be said to deny from prejudice, than to disbelieve with reason. God forbid that I should either say, or seem to insinuate, that there are not many serious and well-informed Christians amongst the descriptions of persons which I have mentioned! I am persuaded there

are

are many such; and am of opinion, that Christianity is in no part of the world better interpreted, more generally understood, or believed on more rational grounds, than in Great Britain. Yet I fear it must be owned, that there are many in all ranks, who are either Christians on the mere authority of others, or unbelievers from ignorance of the subject—from ignorance of that subject, which every sober-minded man must think to be more worthy of investigation than any other.

But worthless will be our investigation even of that subject, if our conviction of the truth of the Christian religion be attended with nothing better than a cold, barren, historical assent to evidence which we cannot resist. Who in this assembly entertains any doubts of the Christian religion being true? Who would not be affronted at having such an imputation thrown upon him? Yet where is the individual who does not live as if there were doubts lurking in his heart? Are not all men more indifferent about preparing for another life, than any man would

would be who firmly expected there would be one? Our piety is less ardent, our self-government less strict, our benevolence less extensive, our general deportment less christian, than becomes men who are in reality persuaded of a life after this, of an Heaven for the righteous, of an Hell for the habitation of the ungodly.

Yet when I see such a respectable assembly as this met together for the purpose of praising God, not in word but in deed; not by the pomp of outward ceremony, but by the inward offering of the heart; not from superstitious fears of purgatory, but from a true sense of gospel duty; I own I rejoice in the hope, that whatever there may be on the Continent, there is much true Christian principle influencing the hearts of individuals in this happy Island.

Ancient Egypt, we are told, provided at the public expence physicians for strangers; Vienna is said to be divided into districts, and medical practitioners appointed by the State to attend the poor in each of them; other Nations in

Europe]

Europe have distinguished themselves by similar establishments: But there is no nation in the world in which hospitals and dispensaries, for alleviating the bodily infirmities of the lower ranks of society, are so abundant, or so well regulated, or so disinterestedly attended by the Faculty, or so munificently supported by voluntary contributions, as in Great Britain; and amongst those in Great Britain, there is none more extensive in it's benignity than the London Hospital; the Governors of this Charity, like the good Samaritan, esteeming every man their neighbour who wants their assistance. We are a rich and luxurious people, but we are also a liberal and humane people; we have great follies to be ashamed of, great sins to be repented of, but we have also some virtues to be pleaded in extenuation of our failings. There is no instance in ancient history, none among the nations now subsisting in every quarter of the world, in which the poor are so amply provided for by the laws of the land; none in which they are so strongly secured from

from the oppression of the powerful; none in which their children are so well educated by the liberality of their superiors; none in which they are treated with so much kindness, and their wants of every sort so humanely attended to, as in this Country. This is honourable to the higher classes; and if it does not inspire the lower orders with gratitude to their benefactors, with attachment to the constitution, with a disposition to loyal and peaceable deportment, with an utter abhorrence of seditious and irreligious men, I must think that they will ill deserve the blessings they enjoy.

But I have wearied your patience too long; I must therefore leave it to the eloquence of others to excite your sympathetic affections, in favour of this Charity, by describing the miseries you are now called upon to lessen or remove; I must leave it to others, to open the reluctant hand of the miser, to arrest the attention of the thoughtless, to interrupt the pleasures of the dissipated, and the pursuits of the worldly-minded, in support of the wretched

Inmates

Inmates of this Hospital. I must rest satisfied with having attempted to establish you in your Christian faith; being persuaded, that charity, when founded on a firm conviction of it's being a duty we owe to God, will always be steady in it's principle, and as extensive in it's operation as the circumstances of each individual will admit. I conclude with recommending to your serious and constant consideration a single Thought—it is a thought which should dwell in the hearts of all; and where it does in reality dwell, it's fruit will be, piety towards God, and good-will towards man: the thought is this—That all the concerns of this world are but for a moment; but that the concerns of the next will have no limit, but Eternity!

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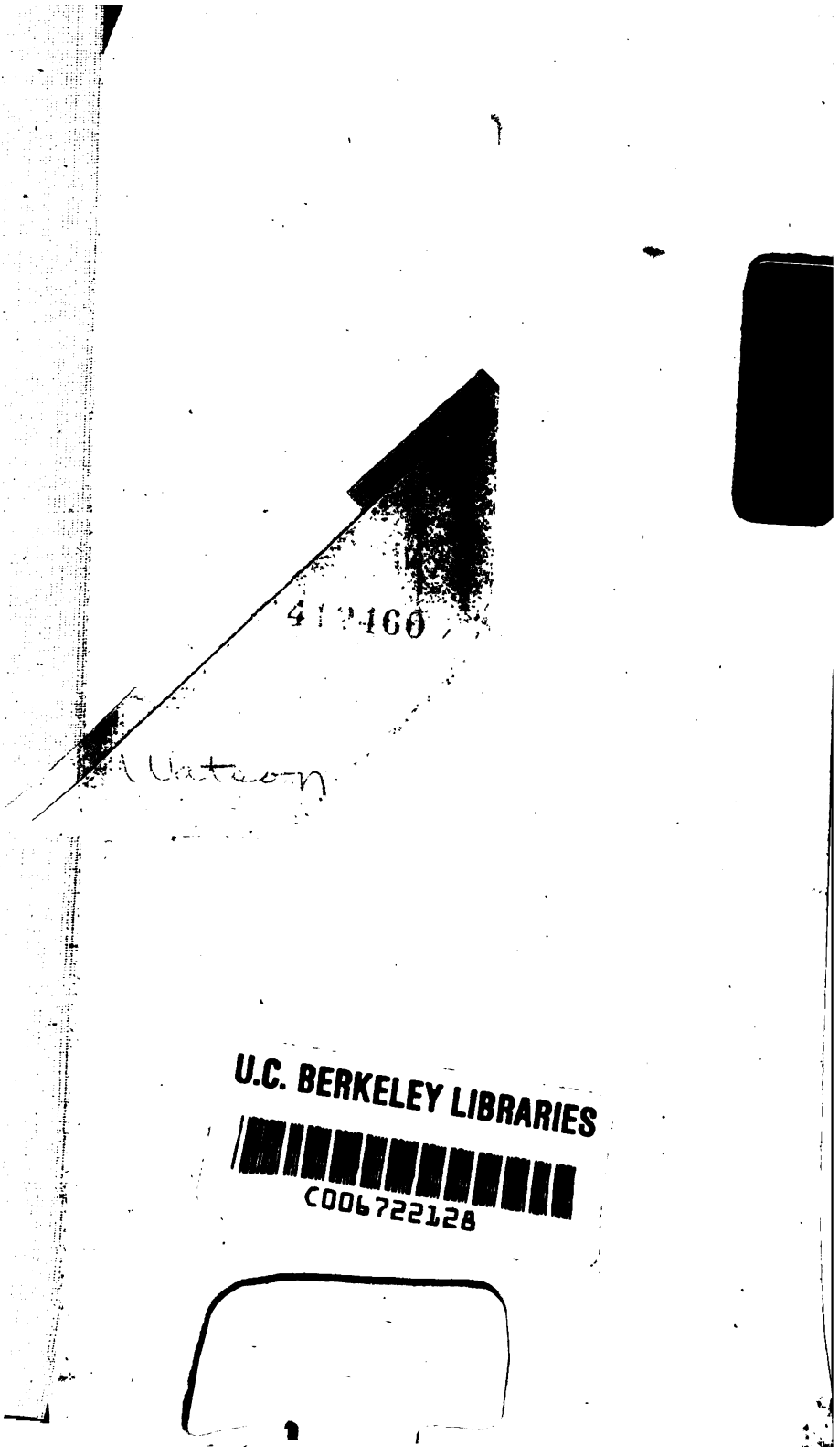
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